

Mid- to Late Nineteenth-Century Art in Europe and the United States



31-1 • Gustave Eiffel EIFFEL TOWER, PARIS
1887–1889. Photographed in March 1889. Height 984' (300 m).

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The world-famous **EIFFEL TOWER** (FIG. 31-1) is a proud reminder of the nineteenth-century French belief in the progress and ultimate perfectibility of civilization through science and technology. Structural engineer Gustave Eiffel (1832–1923) designed and constructed the tower to serve as a monumental approach to the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris. When completed, it stood 984 feet tall and was the tallest structure in the world, taller than the Egyptian pyramids or Gothic cathedrals. The Eiffel Tower was the main attraction of the Universal Exposition, one of more than 20 such international fairs staged throughout Europe and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. These events showcased and compared international industry, science, and the applied, decorative, and fine arts. An object of pride for the French nation, the Eiffel Tower was intended to demonstrate France's superior engineering, technological and industrial knowledge, and power. Although originally conceived as a temporary structure, it still stands today.

The initial response to the Eiffel Tower was mixed. In 1887, a group of 47 writers, musicians, and artists wrote to

Le Temps protesting “the erection ... of the useless and monstrous Eiffel Tower,” which they described as “a black and gigantic factory chimney.” Gustave Eiffel, however, said, “I believe the tower will have its own beauty,” and that it “will show that [the French] are not simply an amusing people, but also the country of engineers.” Indeed, when completed, the Eiffel Tower quickly became an international symbol of advanced thought and modernity among artists, and was admired by the public as a wondrous spectacle. Today it is the symbol of Paris itself.

The tower was one of the city's most photographed structures in 1889, its immensity dwarfing the tiny buildings below. Thousands of tourists to the Exposition bought souvenir photographs taken by professional and commercial photographers. This one, from late March 1889, shows the tower still under construction but almost complete. A close look at the bottom two tiers with the fairgrounds below betrays evidence of rapid last-minute construction in preparation for the May 6th opening.

LEARN ABOUT IT

- 31.1** Understand and evaluate the role played by academic art and architecture, as well as the emergence of various movements that arose in opposition to its principles, in the late nineteenth century.
- 31.2** Investigate the interest in subjects drawn from modern life, as well as the development of new symbolic themes, in Realist, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist art.

- 31.3** Analyze the ways in which the movement toward realism in art reflected the social and political concerns of the nineteenth century.
- 31.4** Examine the early experiments that led to the emergence of photography as a new art form.

EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE MID TO LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The technological, economic, and social transformations initiated by the Industrial Revolution intensified during the nineteenth century. Increasing demands for coal and iron necessitated improvements in mining, metallurgy, and transportation. Likewise, the development of the locomotive and steamship facilitated the shipment of raw materials and merchandise, made passenger travel easier, and encouraged the growth of cities (**MAP 31-1**). These changes also set in motion a vast population migration, as the rural poor moved to cities to find work in factories, mines, and mechanical manufacturing. Industrialists and entrepreneurs enjoyed new levels of wealth and prosperity in this system, but conditions for workers—many of them women and children—were often abysmal. Although new government regulations led to some improvements, socialist movements condemned the exploitation of workers by capitalist factory owners and advocated communal or state ownership of the means of production and distribution.

In 1848, workers' revolts broke out in several European capitals. In that year also, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the *Communist Manifesto*, which predicted the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie (middle class) by the proletariat (working class), the abolition of private property, and the creation of a classless society. At the same time, the Americans Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the country's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York. They called for the equality of women and men before the law, property rights for married women, the acceptance of women into institutions of higher education, the admission of women to all trades and professions, equal pay for equal work, and women's suffrage.

The nineteenth century also witnessed the rise of imperialism. In order to create new markets for their products and to secure access to cheap raw materials and cheap labor, European nations established numerous new colonies by dividing up most of Africa and nearly a third of Asia. Colonial rule frequently suppressed indigenous cultures while exploiting the colonies for the economic development of the European colonial powers.

Scientific discoveries led to the invention of the telegraph, telephone, and radio. By the end of the nineteenth century, electricity powered lighting, motors, trams, and railroads in most European and American cities. Developments in chemistry created many new products, such as aspirin, disinfectants, photographic chemicals, and more effective explosives. The new material of steel, an alloy of iron and carbon, was lighter, harder, and more malleable than iron, and replaced it in heavy construction and transportation. In medicine and public health, Louis Pasteur's purification of beverages through heat (pasteurization) and the development of vaccines, sterilization, and antiseptics led to a dramatic decline in mortality rates all over the Western world.

Some scientific discoveries challenged traditional religious beliefs and affected social philosophy. Geologists concluded that the Earth was far older than the estimated 6,000 years sometimes claimed by biblical literalists. In 1859, Charles Darwin proposed that life evolved gradually through natural selection. Religious conservatives attacked Darwin's account, which seemed to deny divine creation and even the existence of God. Some of his more extreme supporters, however, suggested that the "survival of the fittest" had advanced the human race, with certain types of people—particularly the Anglo-Saxon upper classes—achieving the pinnacle of social evolution. "Social Darwinism" provided a rationalization for the poor conditions of the working class and a justification for colonizing the "underdeveloped" parts of the world.

Industrialists, merchants, professionals, the middle classes, some governments, and national academies of art became new sources of patronage in the arts. Large annual exhibitions in European and American cultural centers took on increasing importance as a means for artists to show their work, win prizes, attract buyers, and gain commissions. Cheap illustrated newspapers and magazines published art criticism that influenced the reception and production of art, both making and breaking artistic careers, and commercial art dealers emerged as important brokers of taste.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw vast changes in how art was conceptualized and created. Some artists became committed political or social activists as industrialization and social unrest continued, while others retreated into their own imagination. Some responded to the ways in which photography transformed vision and perception, many setting themselves up as photographers, while other artists emulated the new medium's clarity in their own work. Still others investigated the difference between photography's detailed but superficial description of visual reality and a deeper, more human reality as a source of inspiration, and others explored the artistic potential of photography's sometimes visually unbalanced compositions, its tendency to compress the illusion of depth and assert its flatness, its sharp framing and abrupt cropping of aspects of the broader world, its lack of an even focus across the picture plane or sometimes the reverse, or even the inability of early photography to "see" red and green equally, causing blank areas of white and black in a photograph. By the end of the century, while many artists were still exploring the reliability of observed reality, others were venturing ever farther into the realm of abstraction.

FRENCH ACADEMIC ARCHITECTURE AND ART

The Académie des Beaux-Arts (founded in 1816 to replace the disbanded Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) and its official art school, the École des Beaux-Arts, continued to exert a powerful influence over the visual arts in France during the nineteenth century. Academic artists controlled the Salon juries, and major public commissions routinely went to academic architects,



MAP 31-1 • EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the nineteenth century, Europe and the United States became increasingly industrialized and many European nations established colonial possessions around the world. Paris was firmly established as the center of the Western art world.

painters, and sculptors. It was to Paris that artists and architects from Europe and the United States came to study the conventions of academic art.

Academic art and architecture frequently depended upon motifs drawn from historic models—a practice called **historicism**. Elaborating on earlier Neoclassical and Romantic revivals, historicist art and architecture encompassed the sweep of history. Historicists often combined allusions to several different historical periods in a single work. Some academic artists catered to the public taste for exotic sights with Orientalist paintings (see “Orientalism,” page 968). These works also combined disparate elements, borrowing from Egyptian, Turkish, and Indian cultures to create an imaginary Middle Eastern world.

ACADEMIC ARCHITECTURE

In 1848, after rioting over living conditions erupted in French cities, Napoleon III (r. as emperor 1852–1870) launched sweeping new reforms. The riots had devastated Paris’s central neighborhoods, and Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809–1891) was engaged to redraw the street grid and rebuild the city. Haussmann imposed

a new rational plan of broad avenues, parks, and open public places upon the medieval heart of Paris. He demolished entire neighborhoods, erasing networks of narrow, winding, medieval streets and summarily evicting the poor from their slums. Then he replaced what he had destroyed with grand new buildings erected along wide, straight, tree-lined avenues that were more suitable for horse-drawn carriages and strolling pedestrians.

The **OPÉRA** (FIG. 31-2), a new city opera house designed by Charles Garnier (1825–1898) and still a major Parisian landmark, was built at an intersection of Haussmann’s grand avenues. Accessible from many directions, the Opéra was designed with transportation and vehicular traffic in mind, and with a modern cast-iron internal frame; yet in other respects it is a masterpiece of historicism derived mostly from the Baroque style, revived here to recall an earlier period of greatness in France. The massive façade, featuring a row of paired columns over an arcade, was intended to recall the seventeenth-century wing of the Louvre, an association meant to assert the continuity of the French nation and to flatter Napoleon III by comparing him favorably with Louis XIV. The building’s primary function—as a place of entertainment for the



31-2 • Charles Garnier
OPÉRA, PARIS
 1861–1874.



31-3 • GRAND STAIRCASE, OPÉRA

✱ **Explore** the architectural panoramas of the interior of the Opéra, Paris on myartslab.com

emperor, his entourage, and the high echelons of French society—accounts for its luxurious detail. The interior, described as a “temple of pleasure,” was even more opulent, with neo-Baroque sculptural groupings, heavy gilded decoration, and a lavish mix of expensive, polychromed materials. More spectacular than the performance on stage was that on the grand, sweeping Baroque staircase (FIG. 31-3), where members of the Paris elite displayed themselves. As Garnier said, the purpose of the Opéra was to fulfill the human desire to hear, to see, and to be seen.

ACADEMIC PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The taste that dominated painting and sculpture in the Académie des Beaux-Arts by the mid nineteenth century is well represented by **THE BIRTH OF VENUS** by Alexandre Cabanel (1823–1889), one of the leading academic artists of the time (FIG. 31-4). After studying with an academic master, Cabanel won the Prix de Rome in 1845, and garnered top honors at the Salon three times in the 1860s and 1870s. In his version of this popular mythological subject (compare FIG. 20-40), Venus floats above the waves, as flying *putti* playfully herald her arrival with conch shells. Cabanel’s mastery of anatomy, flesh tones, and the rippling sea derives from his academic training and technical virtuosity. But the image also carries a strong erotic charge, in the languid limbs, arched back, and diverted eyes of Venus. This combination of mythological pedigree and sexual allure proved irresistible to Napoleon III, who bought *The Birth of Venus* for his private collection.

Although academic and avant-garde art are often seen as polar opposites, the relationship was more complex. Some academic artists



31-4 • Alexandre Cabanel THE BIRTH OF VENUS
1863. Oil on canvas, 52" × 90" (1.35 × 2.29 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

experimented while maintaining academic conventions, while avant-garde artists held many academic practices in high esteem and sought academic approval. The academic artist Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875) illustrates the kind of experimentation that took place even within the academy. Carpeaux, who had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under the Romantic sculptor François Rude (see FIG. 30-55), was commissioned to carve a large sculptural group for the façade of Garnier's Opéra. His work, **THE DANCE** (FIG. 31-5), shows a winged male personification of Dance leaping up joyfully in the midst of a compact group of mostly nude female dancers, an image of uninhibited Dionysian revelry. Like Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*, the work imbues a mythological subject with an erotic charge.

Unlike Cabanel's figures, Carpeaux's were not smooth and generalized in a Neoclassical manner, and this drew criticism from some academicians. The arrangement of his sculptural group also seemed too spontaneous, the facial expressions of the figures too vivid, their musculature too exact, their bone structure and proportions too much of this world, rather than reflections of an ideal one. Carpeaux's work signaled a new direction in academic art, responding to the values of a new generation of patrons from the industrial and merchant classes. These practical new collectors were less interested in art that idealized than in art that brought the ideal down to earth.

31-5 • Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux THE DANCE
1867–1868. Plaster, height approx. 15' (4.6 m).
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



In **THE SNAKE CHARMER** (FIG. 31-6), French academic painter Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) luxuriates in the nineteenth-century fantasy of the Middle East—a characteristic example of **Orientalism**. A young boy, entirely naked, handles a python, while an older man behind him plays a fipple flute, and a huddled audience sits within the background shadows in a blue-tiled room decorated with calligraphic patterns. Gérôme paints the scene with photographic clarity and scrupulous attention to detail, leading us to think that it is an accurate representation of a specific event and locale. Gérôme traveled to the Middle East several times, and was praised by critics of the 1855 Salon for his ethnographic accuracy, but his *Snake Charmer* is a complete fiction, mixing Egyptian, Turkish, and Indian cultures together in a fantastized pastiche.

Orientalism, the European fascination with Middle Eastern cultures, dates to Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt and his rampant looting of

Egyptian objects for the Louvre Museum, which he opened in 1804, and the 24-volume *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1822), recording Egyptian people, lands, and culture that followed. In the 1840s and 1850s, British, French, and Italian photographers established studios at major tourist sites in the Middle East in order to provide photographs for visitors and armchair tourists at home, thus fueling a popular interest in the region.

The scholar Edward Said has described Orientalism, characterizing both academic and avant-garde art in the nineteenth century, as the colonial gaze upon the colonized Orient (the Middle East rather than Asia), seen by the colonizer as something to possess, as a “primitive” or “exotic” playground for the “civilized” European visitor. “Native” men become savage and despotic, and “native” women—and here boys—are sensuously described and sexually available.



31-6 • Jean-Léon Gérôme THE SNAKE CHARMER
c. 1870. Oil on canvas, 33" × 48 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (83.8 × 122.1 cm). Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA. Acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark, 1942. (1955.51)

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

The nineteenth-century desire to record the faces of the new mercantile elite, their achievements and possessions, and even the imperial possessions of nations, found expression in photography. Since the late Renaissance, artists and others had sought a mechanical method for drawing from nature. One early device was the camera obscura (Latin, meaning “dark chamber”), which consists of a darkened room or box with a lens through which light passes,

projecting an upside-down image of the scene onto the opposite wall (or box side), which an artist can then trace. By the nineteenth century, a small, portable camera obscura or even lighter *camera lucida* had become standard equipment for artists. Photography developed as a way to fix—that is, to make permanent—the images produced by a camera obscura (later called a “camera”) on light-sensitive material.

Photography had no single “inventor.” Several individuals worked on the technique simultaneously, each contributing some part to a process that emerged over many years. Around 1830, a handful of experimenters understood ways to “record” the image,

but the last step, “stopping” or “fixing” that image so that further exposure to light would not further darken the image, proved more challenging.

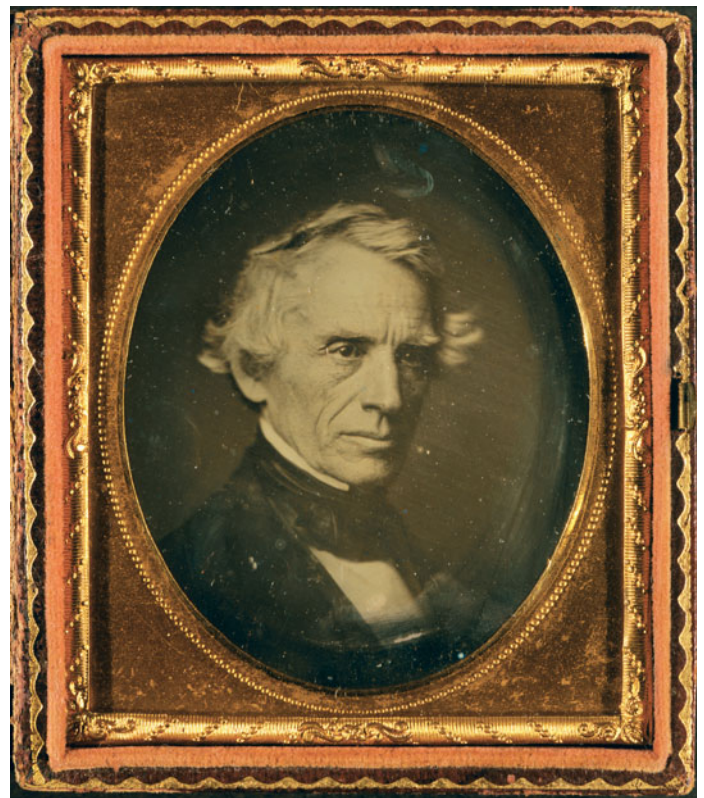
In France, while experimenting with ways to duplicate his paintings, Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787–1851) discovered that a plate coated with light-sensitive chemicals and exposed to light for 20 to 30 minutes would reveal a “latent image” when then exposed to mercury vapors. By 1837, he had developed a method of fixing his image by bathing the plate in a solution of salt, and he vastly improved the process by using the chemical hyposulphate of soda (known as “hypo”) as suggested by Sir John Frederick Herschel (1792–1871). The final image was negative, but when viewed upon a highly polished silver plate it appeared positive. The resulting picture could not be duplicated easily and was very fragile, but its quality was remarkably precise. In Daguerre’s photograph of his studio tabletop (FIG. 31-7), the details are exquisite (though impossible to see in reproduction, even using today’s technology) and the composition mimics the conventions of still-life painting. Daguerre, after he patented and announced his new technology, produced an early type of photograph called a **daguerreotype**, in August 1839.

Even before Daguerre announced his photographic technique in France, the American artist Samuel Morse (1791–1872) traveled to Paris to negotiate exchanging information about his own invention, the telegraph, for information about Daguerre’s photography. Morse introduced the daguerreotype process to America within weeks of Daguerre’s announcement, and by 1841 had reduced exposure times enough to take portrait photographs (FIG. 31-8).

At the same time in England, Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), a wealthy amateur, made negative copies of engravings, lace, and plants by placing them on paper soaked in silver chloride and



31-7 • Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre THE ARTIST'S STUDIO
1837. Daguerreotype, 6½" × 8½" (16.5 × 21.6 cm). Société Française de Photographie, Paris.



31-8 • DAGUERRETYPE OF SAMUEL FINLEY BREESE MORSE

c. 1845. Sixth plate daguerreotype, 2¾" × 3¼" (7 × 8.3 cm).
The Daguerreotype Collection of the Library of Congress,
Washington, DC.

exposing them to light. He also found that the negative image on paper could be exposed again on top of another piece of paper to create a positive image, thus discovering the negative-positive process that became the basis of photographic printing. Talbot’s negative could be used more than once, so he could produce a number of positive images inexpensively. But the **calotype**, as he later called it, produced a soft, fuzzy image. When he heard of Daguerre’s announcement, Talbot rushed to make his own announcement and patent his process. The term for these processes—photography, derived from the Greek for “drawing with light”—was coined by Herschel.

The emerging technology of photography was quickly put to use in making visual records for contemporary audiences and future generations. Early on, however, photographers also experimented with the expressive possibilities of the new medium and worked to create striking compositions. Between 1844 and 1846, Talbot published a book in six parts entitled *The Pencil of Nature*, illustrated entirely with salt-paper prints made from calotype negatives. Most of the photographs were of idyllic rural scenery or carefully arranged still lifes; they were presented as works of art rather than documents of a precisely observed reality. Talbot realized that the imprecision of his process could not compete with the commercial potential of the daguerreotype, and so rather than trying to do so, he chose to view photography in visual and artistic terms. In



31-9 • Henry Fox Talbot THE OPEN DOOR

1843. Salt-paper print from a calotype negative, $5\frac{5}{8}'' \times 7\frac{1}{16}''$ (14.3 × 19.5 cm). Science Museum, London. Fox Talbot Collection

THE OPEN DOOR (FIG. 31-9), for example, shadows create a repeating pattern of diagonal lines that contrast with the rectilinear lines of the architecture. And it conveys meaning, expressing nostalgia for a rural way of life that was fast disappearing in industrial England.

In 1851, Frederick Scott Archer, a British sculptor and photographer, took a major step in the development of early photography. Archer found that silver nitrate would adhere to glass if it was mixed with collodion, a combination of guncotton, ether, and alcohol used in medicinal bandages. When wet, this collodion-silver nitrate mixture needed only a few seconds' exposure to light to create an image. The result was a glass negative, from which countless positive proofs with great tonal subtleties could be made.

American photographers used this newly refined process to document the momentous events of the Civil War (1861–1865) in artfully composed pictures. Alexander Gardner (1821–1882)

31-10 • Alexander Gardner THE HOME OF THE REBEL SHARPSHOOTER: BATTLEFIELD AT GETTYSBURG

1863. Albumen print, $7'' \times 9''$ (18 × 23 cm). Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



was a “camera operator” for Mathew Brady (1822–1896) at the beginning of the conflict, and, working with his assistant Timothy O’Sullivan (c. 1840–1882), he made war photographs that were widely distributed. **THE HOME OF THE REBEL SHARPSHOOTER** (FIG. 31-10) was taken after the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. The technical difficulties were considerable. Wet-plate technology required that the glass plate used to make the negative be coated with a sticky substance holding the light-sensitive chemicals. If the plate dried, the photograph could not be taken, and if dust contaminated the plate, the image would be ruined. Since long exposure times made action photographs impossible, early war photographs were taken in camp or in the aftermath of battle. Gardner’s image seems to show a rebel sharpshooter who has been killed in his look-out. But this rock formation was in the middle of the battlefield, and had neither the height nor the view needed for a

sharpshooter. In fact, the photographers dragged the dead body to the site and posed it; the rifle propped against the wall was theirs. The staging of this photograph raises questions about visual fact and fiction. Like a painting, a photograph is composed to create a picture, but photography promises a kind of factuality that we do not expect from painting. Interestingly, the manipulation

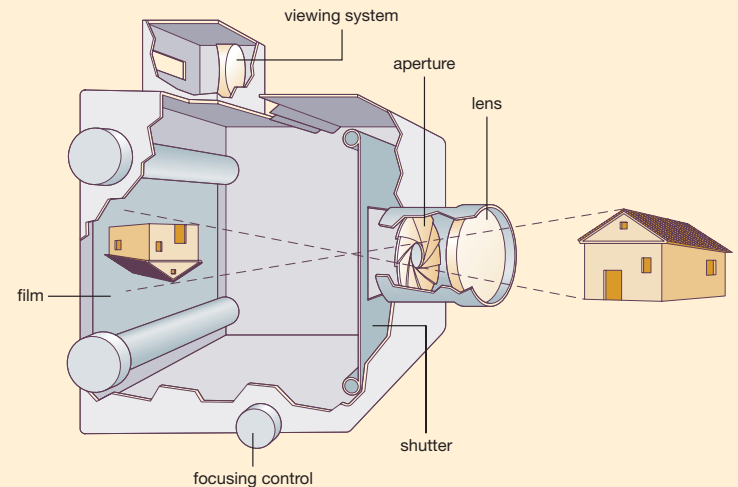
TECHNIQUE | The Photographic Process

A camera is essentially a lightproof box with a hole, called an aperture, which is usually adjustable in size and regulates the amount of light that strikes the film. The aperture is covered with a lens, to focus the image on the film, and a shutter, a hinged flap that opens for a controlled amount of time in order to regulate the length of time the film is exposed to light—usually a small fraction of a second. Modern cameras with viewfinders and small single-lens reflex cameras are generally used at eye level, permitting the photographer to see virtually the same image that will be captured on film.

In modern black-and-white chemical photography, silver halide crystals (silver combined with iodine, chlorine, or other halogens) are suspended in a gelatin base to make an emulsion that coats the film; in early photography, before the invention of plastic, a glass plate was coated with a variety of emulsions. When the shutter is open, light reflected off objects enters the camera and strikes the film, exposing it. Pale objects reflect more light than dark ones. The silver in the emulsion collects most densely where it is exposed to the most light, producing a “negative” image on the film. Later, when the film is placed in a chemical bath (developed), the silver deposits turn black, as if tarnishing. The more light the film receives, the denser the black tone created. A positive image is created from a negative in the darkroom, where the film negative is placed over a sheet of paper that, like the film, has also been treated to make it light-sensitive. Light is then directed through

the negative onto the paper to create a positive image. Multiple positive prints can be generated from a single negative.

Today this chemical process has been largely replaced by digital photography, which records images as digital information files that can be manipulated on computers rather than in darkrooms. The exploitation of the artistic potential of this new photographic medium is a major preoccupation of contemporary artists.

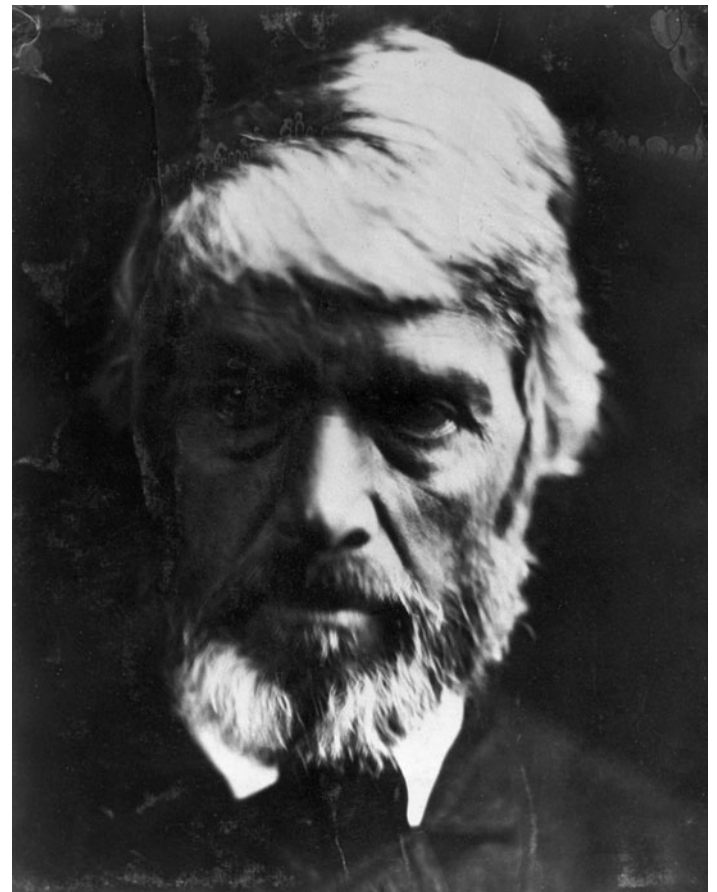


of this photograph did not concern nineteenth-century viewers, who understood clearly photography’s inability to record the visual world without bias.

One of the most creative early photographers was Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–1879), who received her first camera as a gift from her daughters when she was 49. Her principal subjects were the great men and women of British arts, letters, and sciences, many of whom had long been family friends. Cameron’s approach was experimental and radical. Like many of her portraits, that of the famous British historian **THOMAS CARLYLE** is deliberately slightly out of focus (**FIG. 31-11**): Cameron consciously rejected the sharp focus of commercial portrait photography, which she felt accentuated the merely physical attributes and neglected the inner character of the subject. By blurring the details, she sought to call attention to the light that suffused her subjects and to their thoughtful expressions. In her autobiography, Cameron said: “When I have had such men before my camera my whole soul has endeavoured to do its duty towards them in recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man.”

31-11 • Julia Margaret Cameron **PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CARLYLE**

1867. Silver print, 10" × 8" (25.4 × 20.3 cm). The Royal Photographic Society, Collection at National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, England.



REALISM AND THE AVANT-GARDE

In reaction to the rigidity of academic training, some French artists began to consider themselves members of an **avant-garde**, meaning “advance guard” or “vanguard.” The term was coined by the French military during the Napoleonic era to designate the forward units of an advancing army that scouted territory that the main force would soon occupy. Avant-garde artists saw themselves as working in advance of an increasingly bourgeois society. The term was first mentioned in connection with art around 1825 in the political programs of French utopian socialists. Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) suggested that in order to transform modern industrialized society into an ideal state, it would be necessary to gather together an avant-garde of intellectuals, scientists, and artists to lead France into the future.

In 1831, the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc applied the term to the artists of Paris in the aftermath of the revolution of 1830. Viollet-le-Duc vehemently opposed the French academic system of architectural training. His concept of the avant-garde called for a small elite of independent radical thinkers, artists, and architects to break away from the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the norms of society in order to forge new thoughts, ideas, and ways of looking at the world and art. He foresaw that this life would require the sacrifice of artists’ reputations and reduce sales of their work. Most avant-garde artists were neither as radical nor as extreme as Viollet-le-Duc, and, as we have seen, the relationship between the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the avant-garde was complex. Nonetheless, the idea was embraced by a number of artists who have come to characterize the period.

REALISM AND REVOLUTION

In the modern world of Paris at mid-century—a world plagued by violence, social unrest, overcrowding, and poverty—the grand, abstract themes of academic art seemed irrelevant to those thinkers who would come to represent the avant-garde. Rising food prices, high unemployment, political disenfranchisement, and government inaction ignited in a popular rebellion known as the Revolution of 1848, led by a coalition of socialists, anarchists, and workers. It brought an end to the July Monarchy and established the Second Republic (1848–1852). Conflicts among the reformers, however, led to another uprising, in which more than 10,000 of the working poor were killed or injured in their struggle against the new government’s forces. Against this social and political backdrop a new intellectual movement, known as Realism, originated in the novels of Émile Zola, Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, and others who wrote about the real lives of the urban lower classes. What art historians have labeled Realism is less of a style than a commitment to paint the modern world honestly, without turning away from the brutal truths of life for all people, poor as well as privileged.

COURBET Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) was one of the first artists to call himself “avant-garde” or “Realist.” A big, blustery man, he was, in his own words, “not only a Socialist but a democrat and a Republican: in a word, a supporter of the whole Revolution.” Born and raised near the Swiss border in the French town of Ornans, he moved to Paris in 1839. The street fighting in Paris in 1848 radicalized him and became a catalyst for two large canvases that have come to be regarded as the defining works of Realism.

Painted in 1849, the first of these, **THE STONE BREAKERS** (FIG. 31-12), depicts a young boy and an old man crushing rock



31-12 • Gustave Courbet THE STONE BREAKERS
1849. Oil on canvas, 5'3" × 8'6" (1.6 × 2.59 m). Formerly Gemäldegalerie, Dresden; destroyed in World War II.

to produce the gravel used for roadbeds. Stone breakers represent the disenfranchised peasants on whose backs modern life was being built. The younger figure strains to lift a large basket of rocks to the side of the road, dressed in tattered shirt and trousers, but wearing modern work boots. His older companion, seemingly broken by the lowly work, pounds the rocks as he kneels, wearing the more traditional clothing of a peasant, including wooden clogs. The boy thus seems to represent a grim future, while the man signifies an increasingly obsolete rural past. Both are conspicuously faceless. Courbet recorded his inspiration for this painting:

[N]ear Maisières [in the vicinity of Ornans], I stopped to consider two men breaking stones on the highway. It's rare to meet the most complete expression of poverty, so an idea for a picture came to me on the spot. I made an appointment with them at my studio for the next day On the one side is an old man, seventy On the other side is a young fellow ... in his filthy tattered shirt Alas, in labor such as this, one's life begins that way, and it ends the same way.

Two things are clear from this description: Courbet set out to make a political statement, and he invited the men back to his studio so that he could study them more carefully, following academic practice.

By rendering labor on the scale of a history painting—the canvas is over 5 × 8 feet—Courbet intended to provoke. In academic art, monumental canvases were reserved for heroic subjects, but Courbet asserts that peasant laborers should be venerated as heroes. Bypassing the highly finished style and inspiring message of history painting, he signifies the brutality of modern life in his rough use of paint and choice of dull, dark colors, awkward poses, and stilted composition. The scene feels realistically gloomy and degrading. In 1865, his friend, the anarchist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), described *The Stone Breakers* as the first socialist picture ever painted, “an irony of our industrial civilization, which continually invents wonderful machines to perform all kinds of labor ... yet is unable to liberate man from the most backbreaking toil.” Courbet himself described the work as a portrayal of “injustice.”

Courbet began to paint **A BURIAL AT ORNANS** (FIG. 31-13) immediately after *The Stone Breakers* and exhibited the two paintings together at the 1850–1851 Salon. This is a vast painting, measuring roughly 10 by 21 feet, and depicts a rural burial life-size. A crush of people line up in rows across the length of the picture. The gravedigger kneels over the gaping hole in the ground, placed front and center, and flanked by a bored altar boy and a distracted dog; to the left, clergy dressed in red seem indifferent and bored; while to the right, the huddle of rural mourners—Courbet's



31-13 • Gustave Courbet A BURIAL AT ORNANS
1849. Oil on canvas, 10'3½" × 21'9" (3.1 × 6.6 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

A Burial at Ornans was inspired by the 1848 funeral of Courbet's maternal grandfather, Jean-Antoine Oudot, a veteran of the French Revolution of 1789. The painting is not meant as a record of that particular funeral, however, since Oudot is shown alive in profile at the extreme left of the canvas, his image adapted by Courbet from an earlier portrait. The two men to the right of the open grave, dressed not in contemporary but in late eighteenth-century clothing, are also revolutionaries of Oudot's generation. Their proximity to the grave suggests that one of their peers is being buried. Perhaps Courbet's picture links the revolutions of 1789 and 1848, both of which sought to advance the cause of democracy in France.

heroes of modern life—weep in genuine grief. Although painted on a scale befitting the funeral of a hero, Courbet's depiction has none of the idealization of traditional history painting; instead, it captures the awkward, blundering numbness of a real funeral and emphasizes its brutal, physical reality. When shown at the Salon, the painting was attacked by critics who objected to the elevation of a provincial funeral to this heroic scale, to Courbet's disrespect for the rules of academic composition, and even to the lack of any suggestion of the afterlife. Courbet had submitted his work to the Salon knowing that it would be denounced; he wanted to challenge the prescribed subjects, style, and finish of academic painting, to establish his position in the avant-garde, and to create controversy. At the cancellation of the 1854 Salon, and the rejection of some of his works by the International Exposition of 1855, Courbet constructed a temporary building on rented land near the fair's Pavilion of Art and installed a show of his own works that he called the "Pavilion of Realism," boldly asserting his independence from the Salon. Many artists after him would follow in his footsteps.

MILLET Similar accusations of political radicalism were leveled against Jean-François Millet (1814–1875). This artist grew up on a farm and, despite living and working in Paris between 1837 and 1848, he never felt comfortable with urban life. A state commission (with stipend), awarded for his part in the 1848 revolution, allowed him to move to the village of Barbizon, just south of Paris, where he painted the hardships and simple pleasures of the rural poor.

Among his best-known works is **THE GLEANERS** (FIG. 31-14), which shows three women gathering stray grain from the ground after harvest. Despite its soothing, warm colors, the scene is one of extreme poverty. Gleaning was a form of relief offered to the rural poor by landowners, although it required hours of backbreaking work to collect enough wheat to make a single loaf of bread. Two women bend over to reach the tiny stalks of grain remaining on the ground, while a third straightens to ease her back. When Millet exhibited the painting in 1857, critics noted its implicit social criticism and described the work as "Realist." Millet denied the accusations, but his paintings contradict him.



31-14 • Jean-François Millet THE GLEANERS
1857. Oil on canvas, 33" × 44" (83.8 × 111.8 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



31-15 • Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot FIRST LEAVES, NEAR MANTES
c. 1855. Oil on canvas, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ " × 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (34 × 46 cm). Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

COROT The landscape paintings of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875) take a more romantic and less political approach to depicting rural life. After painting historical landscapes early in his career, Corot steadily moved toward more “naturalistic” and intimate scenes of rural France. **FIRST LEAVES, NEAR MANTES** (FIG. 31-15) depicts a scene infused with the soft mist of early spring in the woods. Corot’s feathery brushwork representing the soft, new foliage contrasts with the stark, vertical tree trunks and branches, and, together with the fresh green of the new undergrowth, creates the lyrical mood of a clear spring day. A man and woman pause to talk on the road winding from left to right through the painting, while a woman labors in the woods at the lower right. Corot invites us to imagine ourselves in the picture and feel the crisp, bright air. These images of peaceful country life held great appeal for Parisians who had experienced the chaos of the 1848 revolution and who lived in an increasingly crowded, noisy, and fast-paced metropolis.


BONHEUR Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899) was one of the most popular French painters of farm life. Her success in what was then a male domain owed much to the socialist convictions of her parents, who belonged to a radical utopian sect—founded by the Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825)—that believed not only in the equality of women but also in a future female Messiah. Bonheur’s father, a drawing teacher, provided most of her artistic training.

Bonheur dedicated herself to accurate depictions of modern draft animals, which were becoming increasingly obsolete as technology and industrialization transformed farming. She studied her subjects intensely by reading zoology books and making detailed studies in stockyards and slaughterhouses. In fact, to gain access to these all-male preserves, she had to obtain police permission to dress in men’s clothing. Her professional breakthrough came at the Salon of 1848, where she showed eight paintings and won a first-class medal. **THE HORSE FAIR** (FIG. 31-16),



31-16 • Rosa Bonheur **THE HORSE FAIR**

1853–1855. Oil on canvas, 8'1/4" × 16'7 1/2" (2.45 × 5.07 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

 **Read** the document related to Rosa Bonheur on myartslab.com

Painted in 1853, was based on a horse market near Salpêtrière, but was also partly inspired by the Parthenon marbles in London and by the art of Géricault. The scene shows grooms displaying splendid Percheron horses, some walking obediently in their circle, others rearing up, not yet quite broken. Some have interpreted the painting as a commentary on the lack of rights for women in the 1850s, but it was not read that way at the time. Although unusually monumental for a painting of farm animals, it was highly praised at the 1848 Salon. When the painting later toured throughout Britain and the United States, members of the public paid to see it, and it was widely disseminated in print form on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1887, Cornelius Vanderbilt purchased it for the new Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Bonheur became so famous working within the Salon system that in 1865 she received France's highest award, membership in the Legion of Honor, becoming the first woman to be awarded its Grand Cross.

MANET: "THE PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE"

Along with the concept of the avant-garde, the idea of "modernity" also shaped art in France at this time. The experience of modern life—of constant change and renewal—was linked to the dynamic nature of the city. The themes of the modern city and of political engagement with modern life in an industrialized world are key to understanding the development of painting and literature in France in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In his 1863 essay "The Painter of Modern Life," poet Charles Baudelaire argued that, in order to speak for their time and place, artists' work had to be infused with the idea of modernity. He

called for artists to be painters of contemporary manners and "of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains," using both modern urban subjects and new approaches to seeing and representing the visual world. This break with the past was critical in order to comprehend and comment on the present. Especially after the invention of photography, art was expected to offer new ways of representing reality. One artist who rose to Baudelaire's challenge was the French painter Édouard Manet (1832–1883).

LE DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE At mid-century, the Académie des Beaux-Arts increasingly opened Salon exhibitions to non-academic artists, resulting in a surge in the number of works submitted, and inevitably rejected by, the Salon jury. In 1863, the jury turned down nearly 3,000 works. A storm of protest erupted, prompting Emperor Napoleon III to order an exhibition of the rejected work called the *Salon des Refusés* ("Salon of the Rejected Ones"). Featured in it was Manet's painting **LE DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE (THE LUNCHEON ON THE GRASS)** (Fig. 31-17). A well-born Parisian who had studied in the early 1850s with the independent artist Thomas Couture (1815–1879), Manet had by the early 1860s developed a strong commitment to Realism and modernity, largely as a result of his friendship with Baudelaire. *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* scandalized contemporary viewers all the way up to Napoleon III himself, provoking a critical avalanche that mixed shock with bewilderment. Ironically, the resulting *succès de scandale* ("success from scandal") helped establish Manet's career as a radical, avant-garde, modern artist.



31-17 • Édouard Manet LE DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE (THE LUNCHEON ON THE GRASS)
1863. Oil on canvas, 7' × 8'8" (2.13 × 2.64 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

The most scandalous aspect of the painting was the “immorality” of Manet’s theme: a suburban picnic featuring two fully dressed bourgeois gentlemen seated alongside a completely naked woman, with another scantily dressed woman in the background. Manet’s scandalized audience assumed that these women were prostitutes, and the men their customers. Equally shocking were its references to important works of art of the past, which Académie des Beaux-Arts artists were expected to make, combined with its crude, unvarnished modernity. In contrast, one of the paintings that gathered most renown at the official Salon in that year was Alexandre Cabanel’s *Birth of Venus* (see FIG. 31-4), which, because it presented nudity in a conventionally acceptable, Classical environment and mythological context, was favorably reviewed and quickly entered the collection of Napoleon III.

Manet apparently conceived of *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* as a modern version of a Venetian Renaissance painting in the Louvre, *The Pastoral Concert*, then believed to be by Giorgione but now

attributed to both Titian and Giorgione or to Titian exclusively (see FIG. 21-25). Manet’s composition also refers to a Marcantonio Raimondi engraving of Raphael’s *The Judgment of Paris*—itself based on Classical reliefs of river gods and nymphs. Manet’s modern interpretation of the scene, however, combined with his modern style, was intentionally provocative. Presenting the seamier side of city life under a flimsy guise of Classical art only underlined Manet’s subversiveness. And the stark lighting and sharp outlining of his nude, the cool colors, the flat, cutout quality of his figures, who seem as if they are silhouetted cut-outs set against a painted backdrop, were unsettling to viewers accustomed to the traditional use of controlled gradations of shadows to model smoothly rounded forms nestled into logically mapped spaces.

OLYMPIA Shortly after completing *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe*, Manet painted **OLYMPIA** (FIG. 31-18), its title alluding to a socially

Just as contemporary artists can distribute photographic reproductions of their work, in the nineteenth century, artists used engraving or etching to reproduce their work for distribution to a larger audience.

Works of art that won prizes or created controversy were often engraved for reproduction by specialists in printmaking, and the prints sold at bookstores or magazine stands. J. M. W. Turner hired a team of engravers to capture the delicate tonal shadings of his works. An engraved copper plate could be printed upward of 100 times before the repeated pressing took its toll on image quality. In the later nineteenth century, artists increasingly used steel engraving, wood engraving, and

lithography for printing. Those more durable surfaces could print up to 10,000 copies of an image without much loss of quality, though only a few artists experienced such demand.

One of the canniest self-marketers of the century was Alexandre Cabanel. After Napoleon III bought *The Birth of Venus* (see FIG. 31-4), the artist sold the reproduction rights to the art dealer Adolphe Goupil, who in turn hired other artists to create at least two smaller-scale copies of the work. After the original artist had approved the copies and signed them, the dealer used these as models for engravers who cut the steel plates. The dealer then sold the smaller painted copies.

ambitious prostitute of the same name in a novel and play by Alexandre Dumas the Younger. Like *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, Manet's *Olympia* was based on a Venetian Renaissance source, Titian's "*Venus*" of Urbino (see FIG. 21-28), which Manet had earlier copied in Florence. At first, his painting appears to pay homage to Titian's in its subject matter (at that time believed to be a Venetian courtesan) and composition, but Manet made his modern

counterpart the very antithesis of Titian's reclining nude. Titian's female is curvaceous and softly rounded; Manet's is angular and flattened. Titian's colors are warm and rich; Manet's are cold and harsh, like a photograph; Titian's "Venus" looks coyly at the male spectator, Manet's *Olympia* appears coldly indifferent. And instead of looking up at us, *Olympia* gazes down at us, indicating that she is in the position of power and that we are subordinate,




31-18 • Édouard Manet OLYMPIA

1863. Oil on canvas, 4'3" × 6'2¼" (1.31 × 1.91 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



31-19 • Édouard Manet **A BAR AT THE FOLIES-BERGÈRE**

1881–1882. Oil on canvas. 37³/₄" × 51¹/₄" (95.9 × 130 cm). The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London. (P.1934.SC.234)

 [View](#) the Closer Look for *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* on myartslab.com

akin to the black servant at the foot of the bed who brings her a bouquet of flowers. Our relationship with Olympia is underscored by the reaction of her cat, which—unlike the sleeping dog in the Titian—arches its back at us. In reversing the Titian, Manet overturns the entire tradition of the accommodating female nude. Not surprisingly, conservative critics vilified *Olympia* when it was exhibited at the Salon of 1865.

Manet generally submitted his work to every Salon, but when several were rejected in 1867, he did as Courbet had done in 1855: He asserted his independence by renting a hall nearby and staging his own show. This made Manet the unofficial leader of a group of progressive artists and writers who gathered at the Café Guerbois in the Montmartre district of Paris. Among the artists who frequented the café were Degas, Monet, Pissarro, and Renoir, all of whom would soon exhibit together as the Impressionists and follow Manet's lead in challenging academic conventions.

LATER WORKS Manet worked closely with all these artists and frequently painted themes similar to those favored by the Impressionists, but always retaining his previous dedication to the portrayal of modern urban life. In his last major painting, **A BAR AT THE FOLIES-BERGÈRE** (Fig. 31-19), he maintains his focus on the complex theme of gender and class relations in modern urban life. Here a hard-working young girl serves drinks at a bar in the famous nightclub that offered circuses, musicals, and vaudeville acts (note the legs of a trapeze artist in the upper left corner). She has an unfashionably ruddy face and hands scrubbed raw. In the glittering light created by the electric bulbs and mirrors of the café-concert she seems stiff and distant, certainly self-absorbed, perhaps even depressed, refusing to meet the gaze of her client. The barmaid is at once detached from the scene and part of it, one of the many items among the still life of liquor bottles, tangerines, and flowers, on display for purchase. This image is about sexualized looking and the barmaid's uneasy reflection in the

mirror, which seems to acknowledge that both her class and gender expose her to visual and even sexual consumption.

RESPONSES TO REALISM BEYOND FRANCE

Artists of other nations embraced their own forms of realism in the period after 1850 as the social effects of urbanization and industrialization began to be felt in their countries. While these artists did not label themselves as “Realists” like their contemporaries in France, they did share an interest in presenting unflinching looks at grim reality that exposed the difficult lives of the working poor and the complexities of urban life.

REALISM IN RUSSIA: THE WANDERERS In Russia, a variant on French Realism developed in relation to a new concern for the peasantry. In 1861, the tsar abolished serfdom, emancipating Russia’s peasants from the virtual slavery they had endured on the large estates of the aristocracy. Two years later, a group of painters inspired by the emancipation declared allegiance both to the peasant cause and to freedom from the St. Petersburg Academy of Art, which had controlled Russian art since 1754. Reacting against what they considered the escapist aesthetics of the academy, the members of the group dedicated themselves to a socially useful realism. Committed to bringing art to the people in traveling exhibitions, they called themselves “The Wanderers.” By the late 1870s, members of the group, like their counterparts in music and literature, had also joined a nationalist movement to reassert what they considered to be an authentic Russian culture rooted in the traditions of the peasantry, rejecting the Western European customs that had long predominated among the Russian aristocracy.

Ilya Repin (1844–1930), who attended the St. Petersburg Academy and won a scholarship to study in Paris, joined the Wanderers in 1878 after his return to Russia. He painted a series of works illustrating the social injustices then prevailing in his homeland, including **BARGEHAULERS ON THE VOLGA** (FIG. 31-20), which features a wretched group of peasants condemned to the brutal work of pulling ships up the Volga River. To heighten our sympathy for these workers, Repin placed a youth in the center of the group, a young man who will soon be as worn out as his companions unless something is done to rescue him. This painting was a call to action.

REALISM IN THE UNITED STATES: A CONTINUING TRADITION Though it was not a term used in the United States, realism—often with a political edge—was an unbroken tradition stretching back to Colonial portrait painters (see FIG. 30-1) and continuing in the pioneering work of photographers during the civil war (see FIG. 31-10). There were several kinds of realism in later nineteenth-century American art. Thomas Eakins (1844–1916), for instance, made a series of uncompromising paintings that were criticized for their controversial subject matter. Born in Philadelphia, Eakins trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, but since he thought the training in anatomy lacked rigor, he supplemented his studies at the Jefferson Medical College nearby. He later enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and then spent six months in Spain, where he encountered the profound realism of Baroque artists such as Jusepe de Ribera and Diego Velázquez (see FIGS. 23-17, 23-19). After he returned to Philadelphia in 1870, Eakins specialized in frank portraits and scenes of



31-20 • Ilya Repin **BARGEHAULERS ON THE VOLGA**

1870–1873. Oil on canvas, 4'3¾" × 9'3" (1.3 × 2.81 m). State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



31-21 • Thomas Eakins
THE GROSS CLINIC
 1875. Oil on canvas, 8' × 6'5"
 (2.44 × 1.98 m). Philadelphia
 Museum of Art, Pennsylvania.
 Gift of the Alumni Association to
 Jefferson Medical College in 1878
 and purchased by the Pennsylvania
 Academy of the Fine Arts and the
 Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2007

Eakins, who taught anatomy and figure drawing at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, disapproved of the academic technique of drawing from plaster casts. In 1879, he said, "At best, they are only imitations, and an imitation of an imitation cannot have so much life as an imitation of nature itself." He added, "The Greeks did not study the antique ... the draped figures in the Parthenon pediment were modeled from life, undoubtedly."

everyday life whose lack of conventional charm generated little popular interest. But he was a charismatic teacher, and was soon appointed director of the Pennsylvania Academy.

THE GROSS CLINIC (FIG. 31-21) was one of Eakins's most controversial paintings. Although created specifically for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, it was rejected for the fine-art exhibition—the jury did not consider surgery a fit subject for art—and relegated to the scientific and medical display. The monumental painting shows Dr. Samuel David Gross performing an operation that he pioneered in the surgical amphitheater of Jefferson Medical College, as he pauses to lecture to medical students taking notes in the background—as well as to Eakins himself, whose self-portrait appears along the painting's right edge. A

woman at left, presumably a relative of the patient, cringes in horror at the bloody spectacle. At this time, surgeons were regarded with fear, especially teaching surgeons who frequently thought of the poor as objects on which to practice. But Eakins portrays Gross as a heroic figure, spotlighted by beams of light on his forehead and bloodied right hand with glinting scalpel. Principal illumination, however, is reserved for the patient, presented here not as an entire body but a dehumanized jumble of thigh, buttock, socked feet, and bunches of cloth. In conceiving this portrait, Eakins must have had Rembrandt's famous Baroque painting of Dr. Tulp in mind (see FIG. 23-34), and the American painter's use of light seems to point to a similar homage to scientific achievement—amid the darkness of ignorance and fear, modern science is the light of knowledge



31-22 • Winslow Homer THE LIFE LINE

1884. Oil on canvas, 28³/₄" × 44⁵/₈" (73 × 113.3 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania.

The George W. Elkins Collection, 1924

In the early sketches for this work, the man's face was visible. The decision to cover it focuses attention on the victim, and also on the true hero, the mechanical apparatus known as the "breeches buoy."

and the source of progress. The procedure showcased here, in fact, was a surgical innovation that allowed Dr. Gross to save a patient's leg that heretofore would have been routinely amputated.

Winslow Homer (1836–1910) also developed into a realist painter. Born in Boston, he began his career as a 21-year-old freelance illustrator for popular periodicals such as *Harper's Weekly*, which sent him to cover the Civil War in 1862. In 1867, after a ten-month sojourn in France, Homer returned to paint nostalgic visions of the rural scenes that had figured in his magazine illustrations, but following a sojourn during 1881–1882 in a tiny English fishing village on the rugged North Sea coast, Homer developed a commitment to depicting the working poor. Moved by the hard lives and strength of character of the people he encountered in England, he set aside idyllic subjects for themes of heroic struggle against natural adversity. In England, he had been particularly impressed by the "breeches buoy," a mechanical apparatus used for rescues at sea. During the summer of 1883, he made sketches of one imported by the lifesaving crew in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The following year he painted **THE LIFE LINE** (FIG. 31-22), which depicts a coastguard saving a shipwrecked woman

with the use of a breeches buoy—a testament not simply to valor but also to human ingenuity.

The sculptor Edmonia Lewis (1845–c. 1911) was born in New York State to a Chippewa mother and an African-American father, orphaned at the age of 4, and raised by her mother's family. As a teenager, with the help of abolitionists, she attended Oberlin College, the first college in the United States to grant degrees to women, and then moved to Boston. Her highly successful busts and medallions of abolitionist leaders and Civil War heroes financed her move to Rome in 1867, where she was welcomed into the sculptural circle of American expatriate artist Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908) and used Neoclassical style to address modern, realist concerns. Galvanized by the struggle of recently freed slaves for equality, Lewis created **FOREVER FREE** (FIG. 31-23) in 1867 as a memorial to the Emancipation Proclamation (1862–1863). A diminutive woman kneels in prayerful gratitude beside the looming figure of her male companion, who boosts himself up on the ball that once bound his ankle and raises his broken shackles in a gesture of triumphant liberation. Lewis's enthusiasm outran her financial realities; she had to borrow money to pay

for the marble for this work. She shipped it from Rome back to Boston hoping that a subscription drive among abolitionists would redeem her loan. The effort was only partially successful, but her steady income from the sale of commemorative medallions eventually paid it off.



31-23 • Edmonia Lewis *FOREVER FREE*
1867. Marble, 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 22" \times 17" (104.8 \times 55 \times 43.2 cm).
Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

This sculpture not only celebrates emancipation, but also subtly reflects white attitudes toward women and people of color. Lewis's female is less racialized and more submissive than her male counterpart to align her with the contemporary ideal of womanhood and make her more appealing to white audiences.



31-24 • Henry Ossawa Tanner *THE BANJO LESSON*
1893. Oil on canvas, 49" \times 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (124.4 \times 90 cm). Hampton University Museum, Virginia.

Among Eakins's students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts were women and African-Americans, groups often excluded from art schools. One of the star pupils was Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937), who became the most successful African-American painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The son of a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Tanner grew up in Philadelphia, and after studying at the academy, he initially worked as a photographer and drawing teacher in Atlanta. In 1891, to further his academic training, he moved to Paris, where his painting received favorable critical attention. In the early 1890s, he painted scenes from African-American and rural French life that combined Eakins's realism with the delicate brushwork he encountered in France. With strongly felt, humanizing images like **THE BANJO LESSON** (FIG. 31-24), he sought to counter caricatures of African-American life created by other artists. An elderly man is teaching a young boy seated on his lap, and as their seriousness and concentration connect them, their poverty seems to fade. The use of the banjo here is especially significant since it had become identified with images of minstrels—just the sort of derogatory caricatures that Tanner

sought to replace with his sympathetic genre scenes focused on the intimate interactions that brought dignity and pride to family life. After a trip to Palestine in 1897, Tanner turned to religious subjects, believing that Bible stories could illustrate the struggles and hopes of contemporary African-Americans.

DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITAIN Britain also encountered social and political upheaval at the middle of the nineteenth century. The depression of the “hungry forties,” the Irish Potato Famine, and the Chartist Riots threatened social stability in England. Mid-century British artists painted scenes of religious, medieval, or moral exemplars using a tight realistic style that was quite different from both French and American Realism.

In 1848, seven young London artists formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in response to what they considered the misguided practices of contemporary British art. Instead of the “Raphaelesque” conventions taught at the Royal Academy, the Pre-Raphaelites looked back to the Middle Ages and early Renaissance (before Raphael) for a beauty and spirituality that they found lacking in their own time. They believed this earlier art was more moralistic and “real.”

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) was a leading member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. His painting **LA PIA DE’ TOLOMEI** (FIG. 31-25) illustrates a scene from Dante’s *Purgatory* in which La Pia (the Pious One), wrongly accused of infidelity and imprisoned by her husband in a castle, is dying. The rosary and prayer book at her side refer to her piety, while the sundial and ravens suggest the passage of time and her impending death. La Pia’s continuing love for her husband is represented by his letters, which lie under her prayer book. The luxuriant fig leaves that surround her are traditionally associated with shame, and they seem to suck her into themselves. They have no source in Dante, but had personal relevance for Rossetti: Jane Burden, his model for this and many other paintings, was the wife of his friend William Morris, but she had also become Rossetti’s lover. By fingering her wedding ring, La Pia/Jane suggests that she is a captive not of her husband but of her marriage, evoking Rossetti’s own unhappy situation.

Other British artists drew inspiration from the medieval past as a panacea for modern life in London. William Morris (1834–1896) worked briefly as a painter under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites before turning his attention to interior design and decoration. Morris’s interest in crafts developed in the context of a



31-25 • Dante Gabriel Rossetti LA PIA DE’ TOLOMEI

1868–1869. Oil on canvas, 41½" × 47½" (105.4 × 119.4 cm). Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas. (1956.0031)

The massive gilded frame Rossetti designed for *La Pia de’ Tolomei* features simple moldings on either side of broad, sloping boards, embellished with a few large roundels. The title of the painting is inscribed above the paired roundels at the lower center. On either side of them appear four lines from Dante’s *Purgatory* spoken by the spirit of La Pia, in Italian at the left and in Rossetti’s English translation at the right: “Remember me who am La Pia,—me / From Siena sprung and by Maremma dead. / This in his inmost heart well knoweth he/With whose fair jewel I was ringed and wed.”

This is a partial transcript of Whistler's testimony at the libel trial that he initiated against the art critic John Ruskin. Whistler's responses often provoked laughter, and the judge at one point threatened to clear the courtroom.

Q: What is your definition of a Nocturne?

A: I have, perhaps, meant rather to indicate an artistic interest alone in the work, divesting the picture from any outside sort of interest which might have been otherwise attached to it. It is an arrangement of line, form, and color first ... The *Nocturne in Black and Gold* [see FIG. 31-27] is a night piece, and represents the fireworks at Cremorne.

Q: Not a view of Cremorne?

A: If it were called a view of Cremorne, it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of beholders. It is an artistic arrangement. It was marked 200 guineas ...

Q: I suppose you are willing to admit that your pictures exhibit some eccentricities; you have been told that over and over again?

A: Yes, very often.

Q: You send them to the gallery to invite the admiration of the public?

A: That would be such a vast absurdity on my part that I don't think I could.

Q: Did it take you much time to paint the *Nocturne in Black and Gold*? How soon did you knock it off?

A: I knocked it off in possibly a couple of days; one day to do the work, and another to finish it.

Q: And that was the labor for which you asked 200 guineas?

A: No, it was for the knowledge gained through a lifetime.

The judge ruled in Whistler's favor; Ruskin had indeed libeled him. But he awarded Whistler damages of only one farthing. Since in those days the person who brought the suit had to pay all the court costs, the case ended up bankrupting the artist.

widespread reaction against the shoddy design of industrially produced goods. Unable to find satisfactory furnishings for his new home after his marriage in 1859, Morris designed and constructed them himself, with the help of friends, later founding a decorating firm to produce a full range of medieval-inspired objects. Although many of the furnishings offered by Morris & Company were expensive, one-of-a-kind items, others, such as the rush-seated chair illustrated here (FIG. 31-26), were inexpensive and simple, intended as a handcrafted alternative to machine-made furniture. Concerned with creating a "total" environment, Morris and his colleagues designed not only furniture but also stained glass, tiles, wallpaper, and fabrics, such as the "Peacock and Dragon" curtain seen in the background of FIGURE 31-26.

31-26 • FOREGROUND: Philip Webb SINGLE CHAIR FROM THE SUSSEX RANGE

In production from c. 1865. Ebonized wood with rush seat, 33" × 16½" × 14" (83.8 × 42 × 35.6 cm).

BACKGROUND: William Morris "PEACOCK AND DRAGON" CURTAIN

1878. Handloomed jacquard-woven woolen twill, 12'10½" × 11'5⅝" (3.96 × 3.53 m). Chair and curtain manufactured by Morris & Company. The William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest.


Morris and his principal furniture designer, Philip Webb (1831–1915), adapted the Sussex range from traditional rush-seated chairs of the Sussex region. The handwoven curtain in the background is typical of Morris's fabric designs in its use of flat patterning that affirms the two-dimensional character of the textile medium. The pattern's prolific organic motifs and soothing blue and green hues—the decorative counterpart to those of naturalistic landscape painting—were meant to provide relief from the stresses of modern urban existence.

Morris inspired what became known as the Arts and Crafts Movement. He rebelled against the idea that art was a highly specialized product made for a small elite, and he hoped to usher in a new era of art for the people. He said in lectures: "I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a





31-27 • James Abbott McNeill Whistler *NOCTURNE IN BLACK AND GOLD, THE FALLING ROCKET*
 1875. Oil on panel, 23³/₄" × 18³/₈" (60.2 × 46.7 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan. Gift of Dexter M. Ferry Jr. (46.309)

 **Read** the document related to James Abbott McNeill Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold, The Falling Rocket* on myartslab.com

few." A socialist, Morris opposed mass production and the deadening impact of factory life on the industrial worker. He argued that when laborers made handcrafted objects, they derived satisfaction from being involved in the entire process of creation and thus produced honest and beautiful things.

The American expatriate James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) also focused his attention on the rooms and walls where art was hung, but he did so to satisfy elitist tastes for beauty as its own reward. He also became embroiled in several artistic controversies that laid the groundwork for abstraction in the next century. After flunking out of West Point in the early 1850s, Whistler studied art in Paris, where he was briefly influenced by Courbet's Realism; the two artists painted several seascapes

together. Whistler settled in London in 1859, after which his art began to take on a more "decorative" quality that he called "aesthetic" and which increasingly diverged from observed reality. He believed that the arrangement of a room (or a painting) could be aesthetically pleasing in itself, without reference to the outside world. He occasionally designed exhibition rooms for his art, with the aim of creating a total harmony of objects and space.

Whistler's ideas about art were revolutionary. He was among the first artists to conceive of his paintings as abstractions from rather than representations of observed reality, and he was among the first to collect Japanese art, fascinated by what he perceived as "decorative" line, color, and shape, although he understood little about its meaning or intent. By the middle of the 1860s, Whistler

began to entitle his works “Symphonies” and “Arrangements,” suggesting that their themes resided in their compositions rather than their subject matter. He painted several landscapes with the musical title “Nocturne,” and when he exhibited some of these in 1877, he drew the scorn of England’s leading art critic, John Ruskin (1819–1900), a supporter of the Pre-Raphaelites and their moralistic intentions. Decrying Whistler’s work as carelessly lacking in finish and purpose, Ruskin’s review asked how an artist could “demand 200 guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face.”

The most controversial painting in Whistler’s 1877 exhibition was **NOCTURNE IN BLACK AND GOLD, THE FALLING ROCKET** (FIG. 31-27), and Ruskin’s objections to it precipitated one of the most notorious court dramas in art history. Painted in restricted tonalities, at first glance the work appears completely abstract. In fact, the painting is a night scene depicting a fireworks show over a lake at Cremorne Gardens in London, with viewers vaguely discernible along the lake’s edge in the foreground. Whistler took the term Nocturne from the titles of piano compositions by Frederic Chopin, hoping to evoke an association between the abstract qualities of art and music. After reading Ruskin’s review, Whistler sued the critic for libel (see “Art on Trial in 1877,” page 985). He deliberately turned the courtroom into a public forum, both to defend and to advertise his art. On the witness stand, he maintained that art has no higher purpose than creating visual delight and denied the need for paintings to have “subject matter.” While Whistler never made a completely abstract painting, his theories were integral to the development of abstract art in the next century.

IMPRESSIONISM

The generation of French painters maturing around 1870 continued to paint modern urban subjects, but their perspective differed from that of Manet and the Realists. Instead of challenging social commentary, these younger artists painted pretty pictures of the upper middle class at leisure in the countryside and in the city, and although several members of this group painted rural scenes, their point of view tended to be that of a city person on holiday. They also began to paint not in the studio, but **en plein air** (outdoors, “in the open air”), in an effort to record directly the fleeting effects of light and atmosphere by applying flat expanses of pure color directly onto the canvas. *Plein-air* painting was greatly facilitated by the invention in 1841 of collapsible metal tubes for oil paint that artists could conveniently pack and take with them. Eschewing the tedium of the academic program for painting, with its elaborate preparatory drawings and underpainting, prelude to laborious work in the studio, the Impressionists sought instead to capture the play of light quickly, before it changed.

In April 1874, a group of these artists—including Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir—exhibited together in Paris under the title of the Société Anonyme des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, etc. (Anonymous Corporation of Artist-Painters,

Sculptors, Engravers, etc.). Pissarro organized the group along the lines advocated by anarchists such as Proudhon, who urged citizens to band together into self-supporting grass-roots organizations, rather than relying on state-sanctioned institutions. Pissarro envisioned the Société as a mutual aid group for artists who opposed the state-funded Salons. While the Impressionists are the most famous of its members today, at the time the group included artists working in several styles. All 30 participants agreed not to submit anything that year to the Salon, which had in the past often rejected their work. This was a declaration of independence from the Académie and a bid to gain the public’s attention directly.

While their exhibition received some positive reviews, one critic, Louis Leroy, writing in the satirical journal *Charivari*, seized upon the title of Claude Monet’s painting *Impression: Sunrise* (see FIG. 31-28), and dubbed the entire exhibition “impressionist.” Leroy was ridiculing the fast, open brushstrokes and unfinished look of some of the paintings, but Monet and his colleagues embraced the term because it aptly described their aim of rendering the instantaneous impression and fleeting moment in paint. Seven more Impressionist exhibitions were held between 1876 and 1886, with the membership of the group varying slightly on each occasion; only Pissarro participated in all eight shows. The relative success of these exhibitions prompted other artists to organize their own alternatives to the Salon, and by 1900 the independent exhibition and gallery system had all but eradicated the French academic Salon system. Its centuries-old stranglehold on determining and controlling artistic “standards” was effectively ended.


LANDSCAPE AND LEISURE

Claude Monet (1840–1926) was a leading exponent of Impressionism. Born in Paris but raised in the port city of Le Havre, he trained briefly with an academic teacher but soon established his own studio. His friend Charles-François Daubigny urged him to “be faithful to his impression” and suggested that he create a floating studio on a boat and paint *en plein air*. Like other Impressionists, Monet’s focus was the creation of a modern painting style, not the production of biting social commentary. Initially, the Impressionists celebrated the semirural pleasures of outings to the suburbs afforded to the middle class by the Paris train system. Few early works depict locations far from Paris; most feature the Parisians at leisure—walking, boating, and visiting the fashionable new parks within the city or just outside of town.

In the summer of 1870, the Franco-Prussian War broke out and Monet fled to London, where he spent time with Pissarro and his future art dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel. The disastrous loss of the major industrial regions of Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia at the end of the war devastated the French economy. In Paris, for two months between March and May 1871, workers rose up and established the Commune, a working-class city government, the suppression of which led to an estimated 20,000 dead and 7,500 imprisoned. The horror rocked Paris. Courbet was imprisoned for a short time and, in artists’ circles, the fear of being branded as an



31-28 • Claude Monet
IMPRESSION: SUNRISE
 1872. Oil on canvas, 19" × 24³/₈" (48 × 63 cm). Musée Marmottan, Paris.

 **Read** the document related to Claude Monet on myartslab.com

enemy of the state sent a chill through everyone. After 1871, overt political commentary in French art diminished even more, and the challenge of the avant-garde was expressed increasingly as an insular stylistic rebellion.

In 1873, just after returning to Paris, Monet painted **IMPRESSION: SUNRISE** (FIG. 31-28), a view of the sun rising in the morning fog over the harbor at his home town of Le Havre. The painting is rendered almost entirely of strokes of color (Leroy sneeringly called them “tongue-lickings”). The foreground is ambiguous and the horizon line disappears among the shimmering shapes of steamships and docks in the background, clouded by a thick atmosphere of mist. Monet registers the intensity and shifting forms of a first sketch and presents it as the final work of art. He records the ephemeral play of reflected light and color and its effect on the eye, rather than describing the physical substance of forms and the spatial volumes they occupy. The American painter Lilla Cabot Perry, who befriended Monet in his later years, recalled him telling her:

When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you—a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. Merely think, Here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives your own naive impression of the scene before you.

31-29 • Claude Monet **ROUEN CATHEDRAL: THE PORTAL (IN SUN)**

1894. Oil on canvas, 39¹/₄" × 26" (99.7 × 66 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





31-30 • Camille Pissarro WOODED LANDSCAPE AT L'HERMITAGE, PONTOISE

1878. Oil on canvas, $18\frac{5}{16}$ " \times $22\frac{1}{16}$ " (46.5 \times 56 cm). Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Nicholas S. Pickard

Monet continued to explore personal impressions of light and color during a long career that extended well into the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s he focused his vision even more intently, exploring a limited number of outdoor subjects through several series of paintings: haystacks, poplar trees silhouetted against the sky, and the façade of Rouen Cathedral (**FIG. 31-29**). He painted the cathedral not as an expression of personal religious conviction, but because of his fascination with the way light played across its undulating stone surface, changing its appearance constantly as the lighting changed throughout the day. He painted more than 30 canvases of the Rouen façade, begun from direct observation of the cathedral from a second-story window across the street and finished later in his studio at nearby Giverny. In these paintings, Monet continued his Impressionist

pursuit of capturing the fleeting effects of light and atmosphere, but his extensive reworking of the paintings in his studio produced pictures that were more carefully orchestrated and laboriously executed than his earlier, more spontaneous, **plein air** works.

Monet's friend and fellow artist Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) offered a new Impressionist image of the landscape, painting scenes where the urban meets the rural. At times he portrayed the rural landscape on its own, but he often shows urban visitors to the countryside and small towns or factories embedded in the land as the city encroaches upon them. Born in the Dutch West Indies to French parents and raised near Paris, Pissarro studied art in Paris during the 1850s and early 1860s. In 1870, while he and Monet lived in London, Pissarro had already espoused the principles that would later blossom in Impressionism. The two artists worked



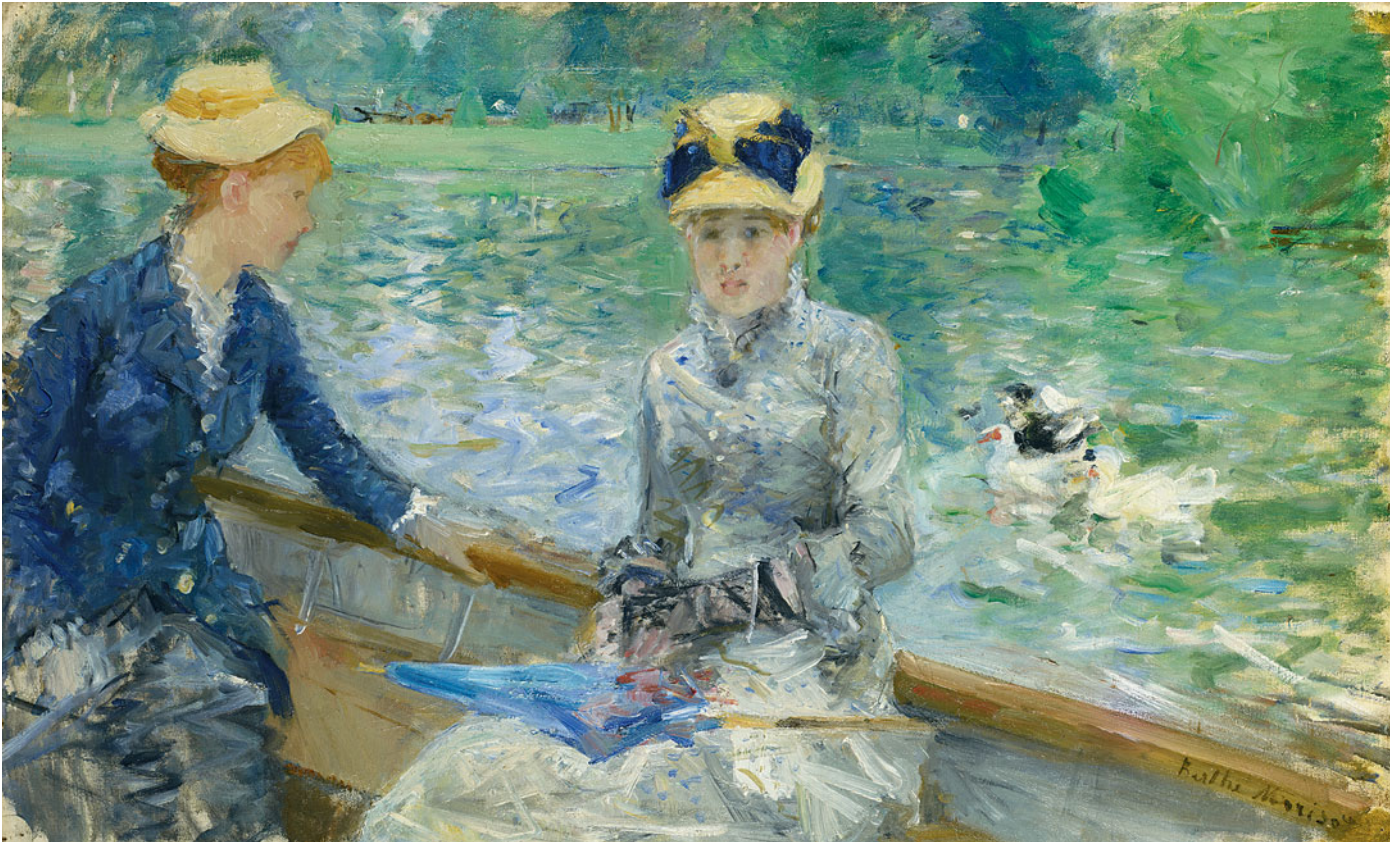
31-31 • Pierre-Auguste Renoir MOULIN DE LA GALETTE
1876. Oil on canvas, 4'3½" × 5'9" (1.31 × 1.75 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

together in England, trying to capture what Pissarro described as “*plein air* light and fugitive effects” by lightening color intensity and hue, and loosening brushstrokes.

Following his return to France, Pissarro settled in Pontoise, a small, hilly village northwest of Paris where he worked for most of the 1870s in an Impressionist style, using high-keyed color and short brushstrokes to capture fleeting qualities of light and atmosphere. In the late 1870s, his painting became more visually complex with darkened colors. In his **WOODED LANDSCAPE AT L'HERMITAGE, PONTOISE (FIG. 31-30)**, for instance, a foreground composition of trees screens the view of a rural path and village behind, flattening space and partly masking the figure at the lower right. Pissarro applies his paint thickly here, with a multitude of short, multi-directional brushstrokes.

In contrast, Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) focused most of his attention not on landscapes but on figures, producing mostly images of the middle class at leisure. When he met Monet at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1862, he was already working as a figure painter. Monet encouraged him

to lighten his palette and to paint outdoors, and by the mid 1870s Renoir was combining a spontaneous handling of natural light with animated figural compositions. In **MOULIN DE LA GALETTE (FIG. 31-31)**, for example, Renoir depicts a convivial crowd relaxing on a Sunday afternoon at an old-fashioned dance hall—the Moulin de la Galette (the “Pancake Mill”), in the Montmartre section of Paris, which opened its outdoor courtyard during good weather. Renoir glamorizes the working-class clientele by placing his attractive bourgeois artist friends and their models among them, striking poses of relaxed congeniality, smiling, dancing, and chatting. He underscores the innocence of their flirtations by including children in the painting in the lower left, while emphasizing the ease of social relations through the relaxed informality of the scene. The overall mood is knit together by the dappled sunlight falling through the trees and Renoir’s soft brushwork weaving blues and purples through the crowd and around the canvas. This naïve image of a carefree life of innocent leisure—a kind of bourgeois paradise removed from the real world—encapsulates Renoir’s idea of the essence of art: “For me a picture should be



31-32 • Berthe Morisot SUMMER'S DAY

1879. Oil on canvas, 17¹³/₁₆" × 29⁵/₁₆" (45.7 × 75.2 cm). National Gallery, London. Lane Bequest, 1917

a pleasant thing, joyful and pretty—yes pretty! There are quite enough unpleasant things in life without the need for us to manufacture more.”

Impressionist artist Berthe Morisot (1841–1895) defied societal conventions to become a professional painter. Morisot and her sister, Edma, copied paintings in the Louvre and studied with several teachers, including Corot, in the late 1850s and early 1860s. The sisters exhibited their art in the five Salons between 1864 and 1868, the year they met Manet. In 1869, Edma married and gave up painting to devote herself to domestic duties, but Berthe continued painting, even after her 1874 marriage to Manet’s brother, Eugène, and the birth of their daughter in 1879. Morisot sent nine paintings to the first exhibition of the Impressionists in 1874 and showed her work in all but one of their subsequent shows.

As a respectable bourgeois lady, Berthe Morisot was not free to prowl the city looking for modern subjects, so she concentrated on depictions of women’s lives, a subject she knew well. In the 1870s, she painted in an increasingly fluid and painterly style, flattening her picture plane and making her brushwork more prominent. In **SUMMER’S DAY** (FIG. 31-32), Morisot shows two elegant young ladies enjoying an outing on the lake of the fashionable Bois du Boulogne. First shown in the fifth Impressionist exhibition in 1880, the painting exemplifies the emphasis on formal features in Impressionist painting—the brushstrokes and the colors are as much its subject as the figures themselves.

MODERN LIFE

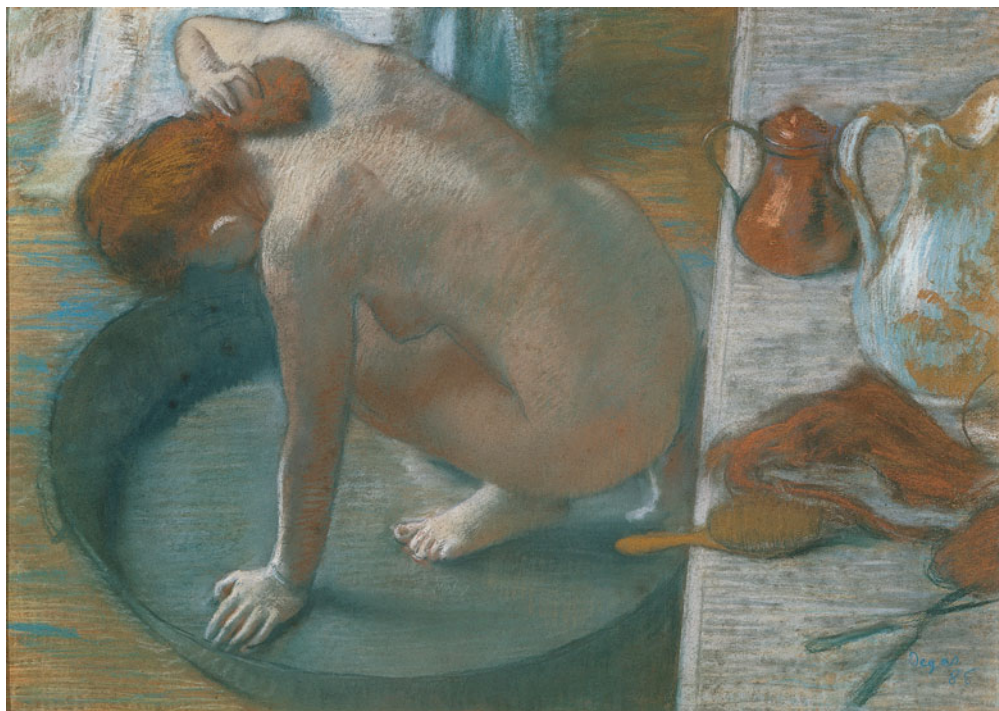
Subjects from urban life also attracted Edgar Degas (1834–1917), although his paintings are closer to Realism in their intensely frank portrayals that often suggest social commentary. Instead of painting outdoors, Degas composed his pictures in the studio from working drawings and photographs. His rigorous academic training at the École des Beaux-Arts in the mid 1850s and his three years in Italy studying the Old Masters blossomed in paintings characterized by complex compositional structure and striking representational clarity. In many respects his themes and style were closer to Manet’s than to the Impressionists.

After a period of painting psychologically probing portraits of friends and relatives, during the 1870s, Degas began painting the modern life of Paris, especially its venues of entertainment and spectacle—the racetrack, the music hall, and the opera, usually focusing on the entertainers rather than on the bourgeois audience. He was especially drawn to the ballet in the 1870s and 1880s, at a time when it was in decline. Degas did not draw or paint actual dancers in rehearsal; rather, he hired dancers, often very young “ballet rats” (as he called them), to come to his studio to pose for him. **THE REHEARSAL ON STAGE** (FIG. 31-33), for example, is a contrived scene, calculated to delight the eye but also to refocus the mind on the stern realities of modern life. Several of the dancers look bored or exhausted; others stretch, perhaps to mitigate the toll this physical work took on their bodies. In the right



31-33 • Edgar Degas THE REHEARSAL ON STAGE

c. 1874. Pastel over brush-and-ink drawing on thin, cream-colored wove paper, laid on bristol board, mounted on canvas, 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (54.3 \times 73 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1929 (29.160.26)



31-34 • Edgar Degas THE TUB

1886. Pastel on cardboard, 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ " \times 32 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (60 \times 83 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



31-35 • Mary Cassatt MOTHER AND CHILD
c. 1890. Oil on canvas, 35½" × 25¾" (90.2 × 64.5 cm). Wichita Art Museum, Kansas.

background slouch two well-dressed, middle-aged men, each probably a "protector" of one of the dancers. Because ballerinas generally came from lower-class families and exhibited their scantily clad bodies in public—something that "respectable" bourgeois women did not do—they were widely assumed to be sexually available, and they often attracted the attentions of wealthy men willing to support them in exchange for sexual favors.

The composition is set in a raked space, as if viewed from a box close to the stage. The abrupt foreshortening is emphasized by the dark scrolls of the double basses that jut up from the lower left. The angular viewpoint from above may derive from Japanese prints, which Degas collected, while the seemingly arbitrary cropping of figures on the left suggests photography, which he also practiced.

Whereas Degas's ballet paintings highlight informal moments associated with public performance, his later images of bathing women are furtive glimpses of intimate moments drawn from private life, usually rendered in the medium of pastel, which only heightens their sense of immediacy. **THE TUB** of 1886 (FIG. 31-34) represents a crouching woman, perched within a small tub, washing her neck with a sponge. Initially, this may seem to be two

separate pictures: at the left the compactly posed woman, balanced precariously on the steep floor of a receding interior space, and juxtaposed next to it on the right, a tipped-up table with a still life of objects associated with bathing. But when coordinated, they establish the viewer's elevated, domineering vantage point. The dramatic, flattened juxtaposition, as well as the compression and cropping of the close frame, are further examples of the impact of Japanese prints and photography on Degas's art.

Another artist who exhibited with the Impressionists but whose art soon diverged from them in both style and technique—conditioned in part by her contact with Degas—was American expatriate Mary Cassatt (1844–1926). Born near Pittsburgh to a well-to-do family and raised in the cosmopolitan world of Philadelphia, she studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts between 1861 and 1865, then moved to Paris for further academic training and lived there for most of the rest of her life. The realism of the figure paintings she exhibited at the Salons of the early and mid 1870s attracted the attention of Degas, who invited her to participate in the fourth Impressionist exhibition in 1879. Although she, like Degas, remained a studio painter and printmaker, her distaste for what she called the "tyranny" of the Salon jury system made her one of the group's staunchest supporters.

Cassatt focused her paintings on the world she knew best: the domestic and social life of bourgeois women. She is known for extraordinarily sensitive representations of women with children, which, like the genre paintings of fellow expatriate Henry Ossawa Tanner (see FIG. 31-24), sought to counteract the clichéd stereotypes of her age. In **MOTHER AND CHILD** from about 1890 (FIG. 31-35), she uses a contrast between the loosely painted, Impressionist treatment of clothing and setting and the solidly modeled forms of faces and hands to rivet our attention on the tender connection between mother and child at bedtime, right after a bath. The drowsy face and flushed cheeks of the child and the weighty limbs have a natural quality, even though the space occupied by the figures seems flattened. Because the structured composition and familiar subject recall much earlier portrayals of the Virgin and Child, Cassatt elevates this small vignette of modern private life into a homage to motherhood and a dialogue with the history of art.

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), another friend of Degas, was instrumental in organizing several Impressionist exhibitions and used his wealth to purchase the work of his friends, amassing a large collection of paintings. He studied with an academic teacher privately and qualified for the École des Beaux-Arts, but never attended. Caillebotte was fascinated by the regularized, radiating streets of Haussmann's Paris (see FIG. 31-2), and his subjects and compositions often represent life along the boulevards. **PARIS STREET, RAINY DAY** (FIG. 31-36) has an unconventional, almost telescopic, asymmetrical composition with a tipped perspective. The broad, wet streets create the subject of this painting, with anonymous, huddled Parisians mostly pushed to the periphery, their shiny umbrellas as prominent as their silhouetted bodies.



31-36 • Gustave Caillebotte PARIS STREET, RAINY DAY

1877. Oil on canvas, 83½" × 108¾" (212.2 × 276.2 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Charles H. and Mary F.S. Worcester Collection (1964.336)

Only the connected couple strolling toward us is fully realized and personalized. Squeezed between the lamppost and the saturated red and green of a shopfront, they stand within an internally framed rectangular composition, capped by the strong horizontal of the two juxtaposed umbrellas.

THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Realists and Impressionists continued to create art until the end of the century, but by the mid 1880s they had relinquished their dominance to a younger generation of innovative artists. This period seems less unified, less directed, and less restricted geographically. Artists increasingly defined the avant-garde in terms of visual experimentation, developing new visual languages more appropriate to newly formulated messages.

These artists included French Post-Impressionists, who reinterpreted art as an expression of an interior world of the imagination or imposed a new scientific rigor on representations of the world around them; late nineteenth-century French sculptors, who studied the passionate physicality of the human form; Symbolist artists, who retreated into fantastical and sometimes horrifying worlds of the imagination; Art Nouveau artists, who rejected the rational order of the industrial world to create images and designs ruled by the writhing, moving asymmetrical shapes of growing plants; and even landscape architects, who recast the urban cityscape into a rambling natural landscape.

POST-IMPRESSIONISM

The English critic Roger Fry coined the term "Post-Impressionism" in 1910 to describe a diverse group of painters whose work he had collected for an exhibition. He acknowledged that these artists did

not share a unified approach to art, but they all used Impressionism as a springboard for developing their individual styles.

SEURAT Georges Seurat (1859–1891), who was born in Paris and trained at the École des Beaux-Arts, sought to “correct” Impressionism, which he found too intellectually shallow and too improvisational. He preferred the clarity of structure he saw in Classical relief sculpture, and the seemingly systematic but actually quite emotive use of color suggested by optics and color theory. He was particularly interested in the “law of the simultaneous contrast of colors” formulated by Michel-Eugène Chevreul in the 1820s. Chevreul observed that adjacent objects not only cast reflections of their own color onto their neighbors, but also create the effect of their **complementary color**. Thus, when a blue object is set next to a yellow one, the eye will detect in the blue object a trace

of purple, the complement of yellow, and in the yellow object a trace of orange, the complement of blue.

Seurat’s goal was to find ways to create such retinal vibrations that enlivened the painted surface, using distinctive short, multi-directional strokes of almost pure color, in what came to be known as “Divisionism” or “Pointillism.” In theory, these juxtaposed small strokes of color would merge in the viewer’s eye to produce the impression of other colors. When perceived from a certain distance they would appear more luminous and intense than the same colors seen separately, while on close inspection Seurat’s strokes and colors would remain distinct and separate.

Seurat’s monumental painting **A SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE** (FIG. 31–37) was first exhibited at the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition in 1886. The theme of weekend leisure is typically Impressionist, but the



31–37 • Georges Seurat A SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE

1884–1886. Oil on canvas, 6'9½" × 10'1¼" (207 × 308 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection (1926.22)

There was a social hierarchy in Parisian parks in the late nineteenth century; the Bois du Boulogne (see FIG. 31–32) was an upper-middle-class park in an area of grand avenues, whereas the Grande Jatte faced a lower-class industrial area across the river, and was easily accessible by train. The figures represent a range of “types” that would have been easily recognizable to the nineteenth-century viewer, such as the middle-class strolling man and his companion to the right, usually identified as a *boulevardier* (or citified dandy) and a *cocotte* (a single woman of the demi-monde), or the working-class *canotier* (oarsman) to the left.

 **View** the Closer Look for *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* on myartslab.com

A BROADER LOOK | Modern Artists and World Cultures: Japonisme

Deeply affected by recently imported examples of Japanese art and prints, which he appreciated for their “exotic” visual effects, Vincent van Gogh painted **JAPONAISERIE: FLOWERING PLUM TREE** (FIG. 31-39) in 1887. After a lengthy isolation, Japan was opened to Western trade and diplomacy in 1853, and in 1855 trade agreements permitted the regular exchange of goods. Among the first Japanese art objects to come to Paris was a sketchbook entitled *Manga* by Hokusai (1760–1849), which was eagerly passed around by Parisian artists. Several of them began to collect Japanese objects; the 1867 Paris International Exposition mounted the first show of Japanese prints in Europe; and immediately thereafter, Japanese lacquers, fans, bronzes, hanging scrolls, kimonos, ceramics, illustrated books, and *ukiyo-e* (prints of the “floating world,” the realm of geishas and popular entertainment) began to appear for sale in specialty shops, art galleries, and even some department stores in Paris. The French obsession with Japan reached such a level by 1872 that the art critic Philippe Burty named the phenomenon **Japonisme**.

Vincent van Gogh admired the design and handcrafted quality of Japanese prints, which he both owned and copied. His *Japonaiserie: Flowering Plum Tree* is largely copied from Hiroshige’s woodblock print *Plum Orchard, Kameido* (FIG. 31-38). Van Gogh places the same flattened tree with its asymmetrical branches, thin, shooting twigs, and tiny blossoms in his foreground; the same smaller trees in the middle ground; and the same railing in the background, behind which can be seen several figures and a small hut. Van Gogh has also appropriated Hiroshige’s color scheme and flattened picture plane, as well as his banners of text. But he also made significant changes in his adaptation. He flattened the scene more extremely than Hiroshige. His grass is a uniform blanket of green, the gray trees with hard black outlines are flat and undifferentiated, and it is not clear whether

the yellow blossoms are in front of or behind the thickly painted red sky. Van Gogh also frames his painting with bold, orange borders containing pseudo-Japanese characters, executed crudely as if to accentuate the “primitiveness” of the image and its source. Van Gogh knew little about Japanese culture

and less about the Japanese painting or printmaking tradition. He used the Hiroshige print as a prompt in order to conjure up what he saw as a simpler, more “primitive” culture than his own, at a time when other artists, like Paul Gauguin, traveled the world in search of “primitive” cultures to inspire their art.



31-38 • Hiroshige PLUM ORCHARD, KAMEIDO

No. 30 from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*. 1857. Woodblock print, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (33.6 \times 22.6 cm). Brooklyn Museum, New York. Gift of Anna Ferris (30.1478.30)



31-39 • Vincent van Gogh JAPONAISERIE: FLOWERING PLUM TREE
 1887. Oil on canvas, 21½" × 18" (54.6 × 45.7 cm). Vincent van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

rigorous technique, the stiff formality of the figures, and the highly calculated geometry of the composition produce a solemn effect quite at odds with the casual naturalism of Impressionism. Seurat painted the entire canvas using only 11 colors in three values. When viewed from a distance of about 9 feet, the painting reads as figures in a park rendered in many colors and tones; but when viewed from a distance of 3 feet, the individual marks of color become more salient, while the forms dissolve into abstraction.

From its first appearance, the painting has been the subject of a number of conflicting interpretations. Contemporary accounts of the island indicate that on Sundays—the newly designated official day off for French working families to spend time together—it was noisy, littered, and chaotic. By painting the island the way he did,

Seurat may have intended to represent an ideal image of working-class and middle-class life and leisure—a model of how tranquil the island, and perhaps life, *should* be in this fantasy of a harmonious blending of the classes. But some art historians see Seurat satirizing here the sterile habits and rigid attitudes of the growing Parisian middle class, not to mention their domineering presence within this working-class preserve. Or is he simply engaged in an intellectual exercise on the nature of form and color in works of art?

VAN GOGH Among the most famous Post-Impressionist artists is the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), who transformed his artistic sources into a highly expressive personal style. The oldest son of a Protestant minister, Van Gogh worked



31-40 • Vincent van Gogh THE STARRY NIGHT

1889. Oil on canvas, 28¾" × 36¼" (73 × 93 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (472.1941)

 [View](#) the Closer Look for *The Starry Night* on myartslab.com

as an art dealer, a teacher, and an evangelist before deciding in 1880 to become an artist. After brief periods of study in Brussels, The Hague, and Antwerp, in 1886 he moved to Paris, where he encountered the Parisian avant-garde. Van Gogh adapted Seurat's Pointillism by applying brilliantly colored paint in multi-directional strokes of impasto (thick applications of paint) to give his pictures a turbulent emotional energy and a palpable surface texture.

Van Gogh was a socialist who believed that modern life, with its constant social change and focus on progress and success, alienated people from one other and from themselves (see "Modern Artists and World Cultures: Japonisme," page 996). His own paintings are efforts to communicate his emotional state by establishing a direct connection between artist and viewer, thereby overcoming the emotional barrenness of modern society. In a prolific output over only ten years, he produced paintings that contributed significantly to the later emergence of Expressionism, in which the intensity of an artist's emotional state will override any desire for fidelity to the actual appearance of things. Van Gogh described his working method in a letter to his brother:

I should like to paint the portrait of an artist friend who dreams great dreams, who works as the nightingale sings, because it is his nature. This man will be fair-haired. I should like to put my appreciation, the love I have for him, into the picture. So I will paint him as he is, as faithfully as I can—to begin with. But that is not the end of the picture. To finish it, I shall be an obstinate colorist. I shall exaggerate the fairness of the hair, arrive at tones of orange, chrome, pale yellow. Behind the head—instead of painting the ordinary wall of the shabby apartment, I shall paint infinity, I shall do a simple background of the richest, most intense blue that I can contrive, and by this simple combination, the shining fair head against this rich blue background, I shall obtain a mysterious effect, like a star in the deep blue sky.

One of the most famous examples of Van Gogh's approach is **THE STARRY NIGHT** (FIG. 31-40), painted near the asylum of Saint-Rémy, from careful observation and the artist's imagination. Above the quiet town, the sky pulsates with celestial rhythms and blazes with exploding stars. Contemplating life and death in a letter, Van Gogh wrote: "Just as we take the train to get to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star." This idea is rendered visible here by the cypress tree, a traditional symbol of both death and eternal life, which rises dramatically to link the terrestrial and celestial realms. The brightest star in the sky is actually a planet, Venus, which is associated with love. It is possible that the picture's extraordinary energy also expresses Van Gogh's euphoric hope of gaining in death the love that had eluded him in life. The painting is a riot of brushwork, as rail-like strokes of intense color writhe across its surface. Van Gogh's brushwork is immediate, expressive, and intense, clearly more a record of what he felt than what he saw. During the last year and a half of his life, he

experienced repeated psychological crises that lasted for days or weeks. While they were raging, he wanted to hurt himself, heard loud noises in his head, and could not paint. The stress and burden of these attacks led him to the asylum where he painted *The Starry Night*, and eventually to suicide in July 1890.

GAUGUIN In painting from imagination more than from nature in *The Starry Night*, Van Gogh may have been following the advice of his close friend Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), who once counseled another artist: "Don't paint from nature too much. Art is an abstraction. Derive this abstraction from nature while dreaming before it, and think more of the creation that will result." Born in Paris to a Peruvian mother and a radical French journalist father, Gauguin lived in Peru until age 7. During the 1870s and early 1880s, he enjoyed a comfortable bourgeois life as a stockbroker, painting in his spare time under the tutelage of Pissarro. Between 1880 and 1886, he exhibited in the final four Impressionist exhibitions. In 1883, he lost his job during a stock market crash, and three years later he abandoned his wife and five children to pursue a full-time painting career. Gauguin knew firsthand the business culture of his time and came to despise it. Believing that escape to a more "primitive" place would bring with it the simpler pleasures of preindustrial life, Gauguin lived for extended periods in the French province of Brittany between 1886 and 1891, traveled to Panama and Martinique in 1887, spent two months in Arles with Van Gogh in 1888, and then in 1891 sailed for Tahiti, a French colony in the South Pacific. After a final sojourn in France in 1893–1895, Gauguin returned to French Polynesia, where he died in 1903.

Gauguin's art was inspired by sources as varied as medieval stained glass, folk art, and Japanese prints; he sought to paint in a "primitive" way, employing the so-called "decorative" qualities of folk art, such as brilliantly colored flat shapes, anti-naturalist color, and bold, black outlines. Gauguin called his style "synthetism," because he believed it synthesized observation and the artist's feelings in an abstracted application of line, shape, space, and color.

MAHANA NO ATUA (*Day of the God*) (see "A Closer Look," page 1000) is very much a product of such synthesis. Despite its Tahitian subject, it was painted in France during Gauguin's brief return visit after two years in the South Pacific. He had gone to Tahiti hoping to find an unspoiled, preindustrial paradise, imagining the Tahitians to be childlike and close to nature. What he discovered was a thoroughly colonized country whose native culture was rapidly disappearing under the pressures of Westernization. In paintings such as this, however, Gauguin chose to ignore this reality and depict instead the Edenic ideal of his own imagination.

SYMBOLISM

Symbolism was an international movement in art and literature championed by a loose affiliation of artists who addressed the irrational fears, desires, and impulses of the human mind in their work. A fascination with the dark recesses of the psyche emerged over the last decades of the nineteenth century, encompassing

A CLOSER LOOK | *Mahana no atua* (Day of the God)

by Paul Gauguin. 1894. Oil on canvas. 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ " × 35 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (69.5 × 90.5 cm).

The Art Institute of Chicago. Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection (1926.198)

Gauguin divided the painting into three horizontal zones, increasingly abstract from top to bottom. The upper zone, painted in the most lifelike manner, centers on the statue of a god set in a beach landscape populated by Tahitians.

As was his practice in many of his Tahitian paintings, Gauguin did not base this sculpted idol on a statue he saw in Tahiti, but rather on pictures he owned of the Buddhist temple complex at Borobudur (see FIG. 10-34).


This middle zone contains three figures posed on an unnaturally pink beach. The green, arched form behind the central woman links her visually to the idol immediately above her.



The central female bather dips her feet in the water and looks coyly out at viewers, while, on either side of her, two androgynous figures recline in fetuslike postures. Their poses perhaps symbolize—left to right—birth, life, and death.

Filling the bottom third of the painting is a striking pool of water, abstracted into a dazzling array of bright colors and arranged in a puzzlike pattern of flat, curvilinear shapes. The left half of this pool seems rooted in natural description, evoking spatial recession. But on the right it becomes flatter and more stylized.

By reflecting a strange and unexpected reality exactly where we expect to see a mirror image of the familiar world, this magic pool seems the perfect symbol of Gauguin's desire to evoke "the mysterious centers of thought." His aim was symbolic rather than descriptive works of art.

 **View** the Closer Look for *Mahana no atua* (Day of the God) on myartslab.com

photographic and scientific examinations of the nature of insanity, as well as a popular interest in the spirit world of mediums. Some Symbolist artists sought escape from modern life in irrational worlds of unrestrained emotion as described by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), whose terrifying stories of the supernatural were popular across Europe. It is hardly coincidental that Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who compared artistic creation to the process of dreaming, wrote his pioneering *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) during this period.

The Symbolists rejected the value placed on rationalism and material progress in modern Western culture, choosing instead to explore the irrational realms of emotion, imagination, and

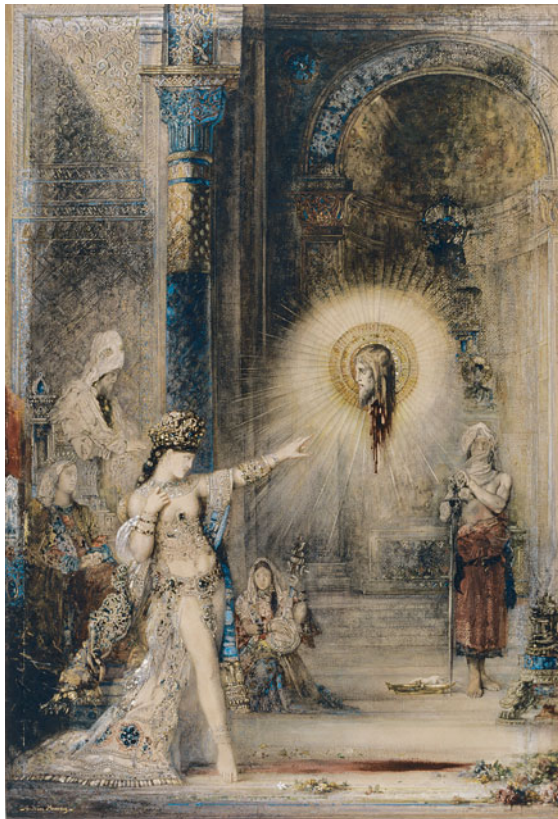
spirituality. They sought a deeper and more mysterious reality beyond everyday life, which they conveyed through strange and ambiguous subject matter and stylized forms that suggest hidden and elusive meanings. They often compared their works to dreams.

Symbolism in painting closely paralleled a similar movement among poets and writers. For example, Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel *À Rebours* (*Against the Grain*), published in 1884, has a single character, an aristocrat named Des Esseintes, who locked himself away from the world because "Imagination could easily be substituted for the vulgar realities of things." Claiming that nature was irrelevant, Des Esseintes mused: "Nature has had her day" and "wearied aesthetes" should take refuge in artworks "steeped in

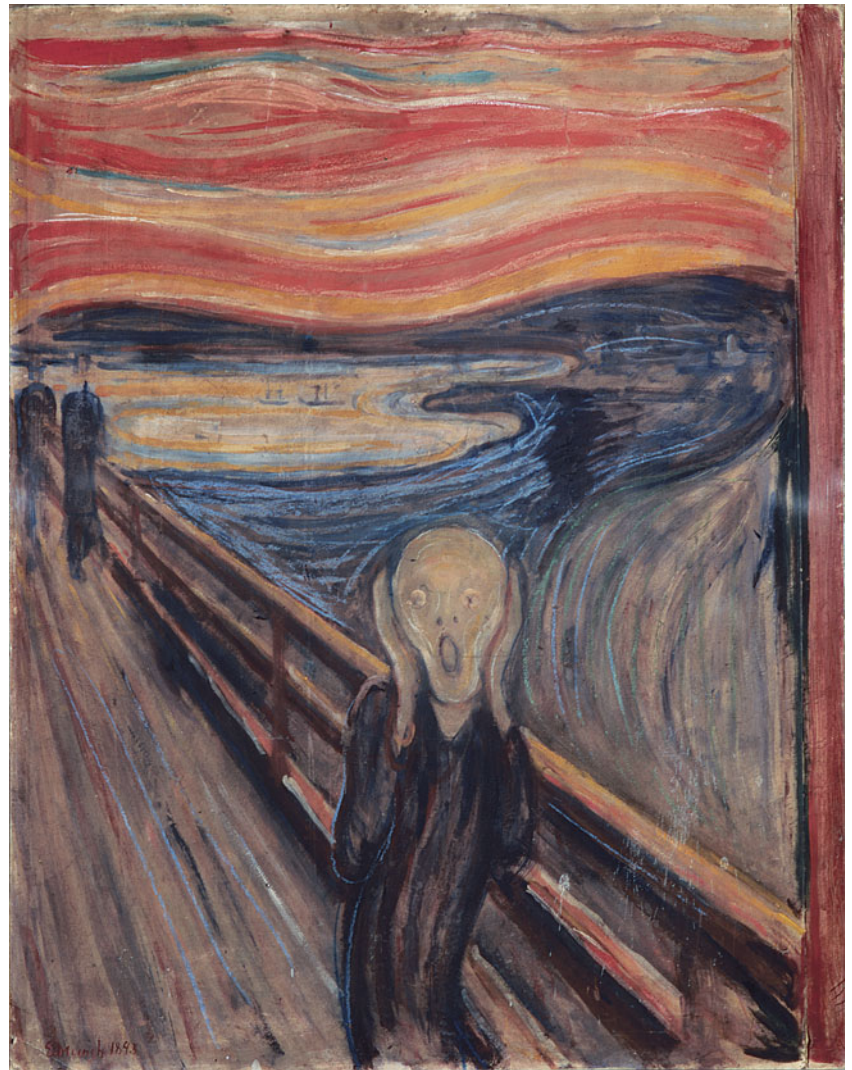
ancient dreams or antique corruptions, far removed from the manner of our present day.”

MOREAU A visionlike atmosphere pervades the later work of Gustave Moreau (1826–1898), an academic artist whom the Symbolists regarded as a precursor. They particularly admired Moreau’s renditions of the biblical Salomé, the young Judaeen princess who, at the instigation of her mother, Herodias, performed an erotic dance before her stepfather, Herod, and demanded as reward the head of John the Baptist (Mark 6:21–28). In **THE APPARITION** (FIG. 31-41), exhibited at the Salon of 1876, the seductive Salomé confronts a vision of the saint’s severed head, which hovers open-eyed in midair, dripping blood and radiating holy light. Moreau depicted this sensual and macabre scene and its exotic setting in meticulous detail, with touches of jewel-like color to create an atmosphere of voluptuous decadence that amplifies Salomé’s role as *femme fatale* who uses her sensuality to destroy her male victim.

The Symbolists, like many smaller groups of artists in the late nineteenth century, staged independent art exhibitions, but unlike the Impressionists,



31-41 • Gustave Moreau THE APPARITION
1874–1876. Watercolor on paper, 41 $\frac{1}{16}$ " × 28 $\frac{3}{16}$ "
(106 × 72.2 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



31-42 • Edvard Munch THE SCREAM
?1910. Tempera and oil on unprimed canvas, 33" × 26" (83.5 × 66 cm).
Munch Museum, Oslo.

who hired halls, printed programs, and charged a small admission fee for their exhibitions, the Symbolists mounted modest shows with little expectation of public interest. During the 1889 Universal Exposition, for example, they hung a few works in a café close to the fairgrounds, with the result that the exhibition went almost unnoticed by the press.

MUNCH Symbolism originated in France but had a profound impact on the avant-garde in other countries, where it frequently took on Expressionist tendencies. In Norway, Edvard Munch (1863–1944) produced a body of work that shows the terrifying workings of an anguished mind. **THE SCREAM** (FIG. 31-42) is the stuff of nightmares and horror movies; its harsh swirling colors and lines direct us wildly around the painting, but bring us right back to the haunting human head at the center and the echoes of its haunting scream, sensed visually. Munch described how the painting began: “One evening I was walking along a path; the city was on one side, and the fjord below. I was tired and ill . . . I sensed a shriek passing through nature . . . I painted this picture, painted the clouds as actual blood.”



31-43 • James Ensor THE INTRIGUE
1890. Oil on canvas, 35½" × 59" (90.3 × 150 cm). Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp.



31-44 • Auguste Rodin THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS
1884–1889. Bronze, 6'10½" × 7'11" × 6'6" (2.1 × 2.4 × 2 m). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966

Rodin's relocation of public sculpture from a high pedestal to a low base will lead, in the twentieth century, to the elimination of the pedestal itself and to the presentation of sculpture in the "real" space of the viewer.

ENSOR The Belgian painter and printmaker James Ensor (1860–1949) studied for four years at the Brussels Academy, but spent the rest of his life in the nearby coastal resort town of Ostend, where he produced equally terrifying paintings, also combining Symbolist and Expressionist tendencies. **THE INTRIGUE** (FIG. 31-43) shows a tightly packed group of agitated people, pushed toward the viewer into the foreground. Masks—modeled on the grotesque papier-mâché masks Ensor’s family sold for the pre-Lenten carnival—conceal their faces, giving them a disturbing, mindless, menacing quality. Ensor’s acidic colors and energetic handling of the painted surface only increase the viewers’ anxiety.

FRENCH SCULPTURE

A defiance of conventional expectations and an interest in emotional expressiveness also characterize the work of late nineteenth-century Europe’s most successful and influential sculptor, Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). Born in Paris, Rodin failed on three occasions to gain entrance to the École des Beaux-Arts and consequently spent the first 20 years of his career as an assistant to other sculptors and decorators. After a trip to Italy in 1875, where he saw the sculpture of Donatello and Michelangelo, Rodin developed a style of vigorously modeled figures in unconventional, even awkward poses, which was simultaneously scorned by academic critics and admired by the general public.

Rodin’s status as a major sculptor was confirmed in 1884, when he won a competition to create **THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS** (FIG. 31-44), for the city of Calais, commemorating a local event from the Hundred Years’ War. In 1347, Edward III of England offered to spare the besieged city if six leading citizens (burghers)—dressed only in sackcloth with rope halters and carrying the keys to the city—surrendered themselves to him for execution. Though it is unknown to them at this point, the king would be so impressed by their courage, that he would spare them.

The Calais commissioners were pleased neither with Rodin’s conception of the event nor with his plan to display the figures on a low base, almost at street level, to suggest to viewers that ordinary people like themselves were capable of noble acts. Instead of calm, idealized heroes, Rodin presented ordinary-looking men in various attitudes of resignation and despair. He exaggerated their facial expressions, lengthened their arms, greatly enlarged their hands and feet, and swathed them in heavy fabric, showing not only how they may have looked but also how they must have felt as they forced themselves to take one difficult step after another. Rodin’s willingness to stylize the human body for expressive purposes opened the way for subsequent sculptural abstractions.

Camille Claudel (1864–1943), who was Rodin’s assistant while he worked on *The Burgers of Calais*, had already studied sculpture formally before joining Rodin’s studio. She soon became his mistress, and their often-stormy relationship lasted 15 years. Most often remembered for her dramatic life story,



31-45 • Camille Claudel THE WALTZ
1892–1905. Bronze, height 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (25 cm). Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

French composer Claude Debussy, a close friend of Claudel, displayed a cast of this sculpture on his piano. Debussy acknowledged the influence of art and literature on his musical innovations.

Claudel enjoyed independent professional success but suffered a breakdown that sent her to a mental hospital for the last 30 years of her life.

One of Claudel’s most celebrated works is **THE WALTZ** (FIG. 31-45), produced in several versions and sizes between 1892 and 1905. The sculpture depicts a dancing couple, both nude, although the woman’s lower body is covered with long, flowing drapery, a concession she made after an inspector from the Ministry of Fine Arts declared their sensuality unacceptable, recommending that her state commission for a marble version of the work be revoked. The subject of the waltz alone was controversial at this time because of the close contact demanded of dancers. Claudel added enough drapery to regain the commission, but she never finished it. She did, however, cast the modified version in bronze as a tabletop sculpture, in which the spiral flow of the cloth creates the illusion of rapturous movement as the embracing dancers twirl through space.



31-46 • Victor Horta
STAIRWAY, TASSEL HOUSE,
BRUSSELS
 1892–1893.

ART NOUVEAU

The swirling mass of drapery in Claudel's *The Waltz* has a stylistic affinity with Art Nouveau (French for “new art”), a movement launched in the early 1890s that permeated all aspects of European design for more than a decade. Art Nouveau embraced the use of modern industrial materials but rejected the functional aesthetic of works such as the Eiffel Tower (see FIG. 31-1) that showcased exposed structure as architectural design. Art Nouveau artists and

architects drew particular inspiration from nature, especially from vines, snakes, flowers, and winged insects, whose delicate and sinuous forms were consistent with the graceful and attenuated aesthetic principles of the movement. The goal was to harmonize all aspects of design into an integrated whole, as found in nature itself.

HORTA The artist most responsible for developing the Art Nouveau style in architecture was the Belgian Victor Horta (1861–

1947). After academic training in Ghent and Brussels, Horta worked in the office of a Neoclassical architect in Brussels for six years before opening his own practice in 1890. In 1892, he received his first important commission, a private residence in Brussels for a Professor Tassel. The result, especially the house's entry hall and staircase (FIG. 31-46), was strikingly original. The ironwork, wall decoration, and floor tiles were all designed in an intricate series of long, graceful curves. Although Horta's sources are still debated, he was apparently impressed by the stylized linear designs of the English Arts and Crafts Movement of the 1880s. His concern for integrating the various arts into a more unified whole, like his reliance on sinuous decorative line, derived in part from English reformers such as William Morris.

GAUDÍ The application of graceful linearity to all aspects of design, evident in the entry hall of the Tassel House, began a vogue that spread across Europe. In Spain, where the style was called *Modernismo*, the major practitioner was the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí i Cornet (1852–1926). Gaudí integrated natural forms into the design of buildings and parks that are still revolutionary in their dynamic freedom of line.

In 1904, the wealthy industrialist Josep Batllò commissioned Gaudí to design a private residence to surpass the lavish houses of other prominent families in Barcelona. Gaudí convinced his patron to retain the underlying structure of an existing building, but transform its façade and interior spaces. Gaudí's façade (FIG. 31-47) is a dreamlike fantasy of undulating sandstone sculptures and multicolored glass and tile surfaces, imaginatively mixing the Islamic, Gothic, and Baroque visual traditions of Barcelona. The gaping lower-story windows are the source of the building's nickname, the "house of yawns," while the use of what look like giant human tibias for upright supports led others to call it the "house of bones." The roof resembles a recumbent dragon with overlapping tiles as scales. A fanciful turret surfaces at its edge, recalling the sword of St. George—patron of Catalunya—plunged into the back of his legendary foe. Gaudí's highly personal alternative to academic historicism and modern industrialization in urban



31-47 • Antonio Gaudí CASA BATLLÒ, BARCELONA
43 Passeig de Gràcia. 1900–1907.

buildings such as this reflects his affinity with Iberian traditions as well as his concern to provide imaginative surroundings to enrich the lives of city dwellers.



31-48 • Hector Guimard DESK
c. 1899 (remodeled after 1909). Olive wood with ash panels, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (73 \times 121 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Madame Hector Guimard

GUIMARD The leading French practitioner of Art Nouveau was Hector Guimard (1867–1942), who embraced the movement after meeting Horta in 1895. Guimard is most famous for his designs of entrances to the Paris Métro (subway) at the turn of the century, but he devoted much of his career to interior design and furnishings, such as this **DESK** that he made for himself (FIG. 31-48). Instead of a static and stable object, Guimard handcrafted an asymmetrical, organic entity that seems to undulate and grow around the person who sits at its workspace.

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) suffered from a genetic disorder that stunted his growth and left him physically disabled. Born into an aristocratic family in southern France, he moved to Paris in 1882, where his private academic training was transformed when he discovered the work of Degas. He also discovered Montmartre, the entertainment district of Paris that housed the most bohemian of the avant-garde artists. From the late 1880s, Toulouse-Lautrec dedicated himself to depicting the nightlife of Montmartre—the cafés, theaters, dance halls, and brothels that he himself frequented.

Between 1891 and 1901, Toulouse-Lautrec designed roughly 30 lithographic posters for Montmartre's more famous nightspots, advertising their most popular entertainers. One features the notoriously limber dancer **JANE AVRIL** performing the infamous can-can (FIG. 31-49). Toulouse-Lautrec places Avril on a stage that zooms into the background. The hand and face of a double-bass player, part of his instrument, and pages of music frame the poster in the extreme foreground at lower right—a bold foreshortening that recalls the compositions of Degas (see FIG. 31-33).



31-49 • Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec JANE AVRIL
1893. Lithograph, 50 $\frac{1}{2}$ " \times 37" (129 \times 94 cm). San Diego Museum of Art. Gift of the Baldwin M. Baldwin Foundation (1987.32)

But Toulouse-Lautrec's image emphasizes Avril's sexuality in order to draw in the crowds, while Degas's pictures coax visual beauty from frank Realism. Toulouse-Lautrec outlines his forms, flattens his space, and suppresses modeling to accommodate the cheap colored lithographic printing technique he used, but the resulting emphasis on bold silhouettes and curving lines is distinctively Art Nouveau.

THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERNISM

The history of late nineteenth-century architecture reflects a dilemma faced by the industrial city, caught between the classicizing tradition of the Beaux-Arts academic style and the materials, construction methods, and new aesthetic of industry. The École des Beaux-Arts, although marginalized by the end of the century by new trends in painting, came into its own as the training ground for European and American architects after 1880, while industrialization in places like Chicago simultaneously demanded new ways of thinking about tall and large buildings.

At the same time, Paul Cézanne, late in his life, altered the course of avant-garde painting by returning to an intense visual study of the world around him, scrutinizing it like a specimen on a dissecting table and urging younger artists to consider new ways of creating artistic meaning. In 1906, the year Cézanne died,

a retrospective exhibition of his life's work in Paris revealed his methods to the next generation of artists, who would be the creators of Modernism.

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE: TECHNOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

The pace of life speeded up considerably over the course of the nineteenth century. Industrialization allowed people to manufacture more, consume more, travel more, and do more, in greater numbers than before. Industrialization caused urbanization, which in turn demanded more industrialization. A belief in the perfectibility of society spawned more than 20 international fairs celebrating innovations in industry and technology. One of the first of these took place in London in 1851. The Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations was mounted by the British to display their industrial might, assert their right to empire, and quell lingering public unrest after the 1848 revolutions elsewhere in Europe. The centerpiece of the Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace, introduced new modern building techniques and aesthetics.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE The revolutionary construction of **THE CRYSTAL PALACE** (FIG. 31-50), created by Joseph Paxton (1803–1865), featured a structural skeleton of cast iron that held iron-framed glass panes measuring 49 by 30 inches, the largest size that could be mass-produced at the time.



31-50 • Joseph Paxton THE CRYSTAL PALACE
London. 1850–1851. Iron, glass, and wood. (Print of the Great Exhibition of 1851; printed and published by Dickinson Brothers, London, 1854.)

Prefabricated wooden ribs and bars supported the panes. The triple-tiered edifice was the largest space ever enclosed up to that time—1,851 feet long, covering more than 18 acres, and providing almost a million square feet of exhibition space. The central vaulted transept—based on the design for new cast-iron train stations—rose 108 feet to accommodate a row of the elm trees dear to Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria (r. 1837–1901). By the end of the exhibition, 6 million people had visited it, most agreeing that the Crystal Palace was a technological marvel. Even so, most architects and critics, still wedded to Neoclassicism and Romanticism, considered it a work of engineering rather than legitimate architecture because the novelty of its iron and glass frame overshadowed its Gothic Revival style.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE Henri Labrouste (1801–1875)—trained as an architect at the École des Beaux-Arts, where he also taught—had a radical desire to fuse the École’s historicizing approach to architecture with the technical innovations of industrial engineering. Although reluctant to push his ideas at the École, he pursued them in his architecture. The **READING ROOM** of the Bibliothèque Nationale (**FIG. 31-51**) is an example of this fusion. A series of domes form the ceiling—faced with bright white ceramic tiles, crowned with glass-covered oculi that light the reading room, and supported on thin iron arches and columns that open the space visually. The mixture of historical allusions in the classical detailing, combined with the vast open space made possible by industrial materials, is thoroughly modern.



31-51 • Henri Labrouste READING ROOM, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS
1862–1868.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

In the United States, up until this time, as in Europe, major architectural projects were expected to embody Beaux-Arts historicism. But the modern city required new building types for industry, transportation, commerce, storage, and habitation—types that would accommodate more people and more activities in urban areas where land prices were skyrocketing. Chicago was a case in point. As the transportation hub for grain, livestock, and other produce headed from the rural Midwest to the cities of the east and west coasts, Chicago became a populous, wealthy city by the 1890s. As new department stores, commercial facilities, and office buildings were designed, primarily with practical needs in mind, Chicago also became the cradle for a novel way of thinking about urban design and construction, in which function gave birth to architectural form.

WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1895) was the first American to study architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Extraordinarily skilled in Beaux-Arts historicism and determined to raise the standards of American architecture, he built in every accepted style, including Gothic, French Classicist, and Italian Renaissance. After the Civil War, Hunt built many lavish mansions for a growing class of wealthy eastern industrialists and financiers, emulating aristocratic European models.

Late in his career, Hunt supervised the design of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, commemorating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas. Rather than focus on engineering wonders as in previous fairs

(although the exhibition included the first ferris wheel), the Chicago planning board decided to build “permanent buildings—a dream city.” To create a sense of unity among these buildings (which were, in fact temporary, constructed from a mixture of plaster and fibrous materials, rather than masonry), a single style for the fair was settled upon—the Classical style, alluding to ancient Greece and republican Rome to reflect America's pride in its own democratic institutions as well as its emergence as a world power. A photograph of Hunt's **COURT OF HONOR** (FIG. 31-52) shows the Beaux-Arts style of the so-called “White City.”

The World's Columbian Exposition was intended to be a model of the ideal American city—clean, spacious, carefully planned, and Classically styled—in contrast to the soot and overcrowding of most unplanned American cities. Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York City's Central Park (see “The City Park,” page 1010), was responsible for the exhibition's landscape design. He converted the marshy lakefront into a series of lagoons, canals, ponds, and islands, some laid out formally, as in the White City, and others informally, as in the “Midway,” containing the busy conglomerate of pavilions representing “less civilized” nations. Between these two parts stood the ferris wheel, which provided a spectacular view of the fair and the city. After the fair, most of its buildings were demolished, but Olmsted's landscaping has remained.

RICHARDSON The second American architect to study at the École des Beaux-Arts was Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886). Born in Louisiana and educated at Harvard and Tulane, Richardson returned from Paris in 1865 to settle in New York. He designed architecture in a variety of revival styles but is most



31-52 • Richard Morris Hunt COURT OF HONOR, WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, CHICAGO
1893. View from the east.

Parks originated during the second millennium BCE in China as enclosed hunting reserves for kings and the nobility. In Europe, from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, they remained private recreation grounds for the privileged. The first urban park intended for the public was in Munich, Germany. Laid out by Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell in 1789–1795 in the picturesque style of an English landscape garden (see FIG. 30–16), the park contained irregular lakes, gently sloping hills, broad meadows, and paths meandering through wooded areas.

The crowding and pollution of cities during the Industrial Revolution prompted the creation of large public parks whose green open spaces would help purify the air and provide city dwellers of all classes with a place for healthy recreation. Numerous municipal parks were built in Britain during the 1830s and 1840s and in Paris during the 1850s and 1860s, when Georges-Eugène Haussmann redesigned the former royal hunting forests of the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes in the English style favored by Emperor Napoleon III.

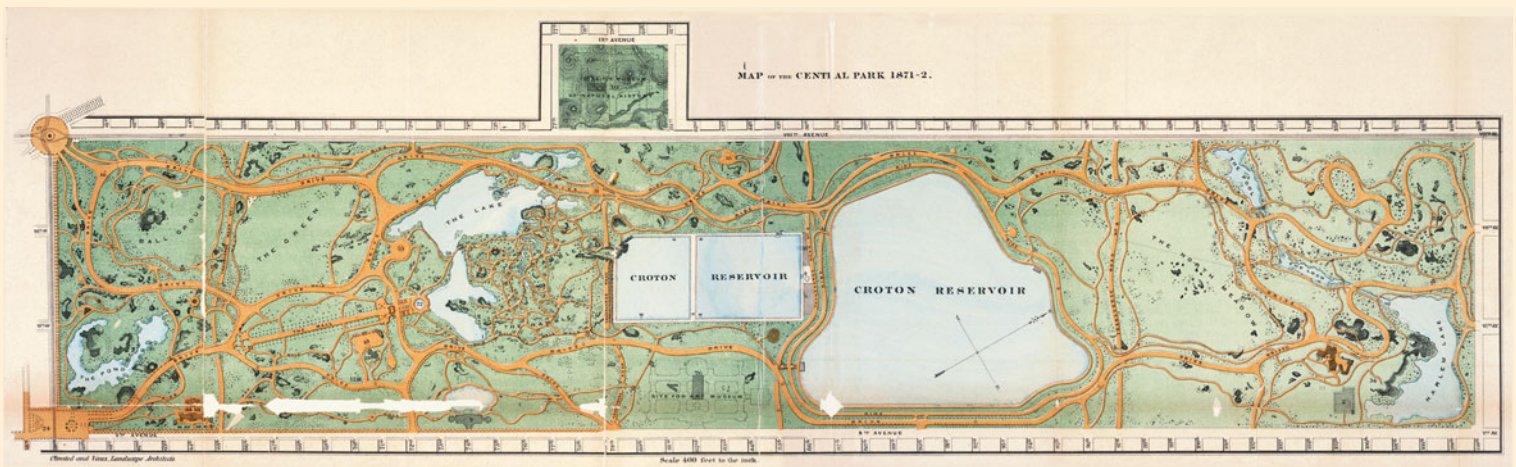
In American cities before 1857, the only public outdoor spaces were small squares found between certain intersections, or larger gardens, such as the Boston Public Garden, neither of which filled the growing need for varied recreational facilities in the city. For a time, landscaped suburban cemeteries in the picturesque style were popular sites for strolling, picnicking, and even horse racing—an incongruous set of uses that strikingly demonstrated the need for more urban parks.

The rapid growth of Manhattan in the nineteenth century spurred civic leaders to set aside parkland while open space still existed. The city purchased an 843-acre tract in the center of the island and in 1857 announced a competition for its design as Central Park. The competition required that designs include a parade ground, playgrounds, a site for an

exhibition or concert hall, sites for a fountain and for a viewing tower, a flower garden, a pond for ice skating, and four east–west cross-streets so that the park would not interfere with the city’s vehicular traffic.


The latter condition was pivotal to the winning design, drawn up by architect Calvert Vaux (1824–1895) and park superintendent Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903), which sank the crosstown roads in trenches hidden below the surface of the park and designed separate routes for carriages, horseback riders, and pedestrians (FIG. 31–53).

Believing that the “park of any great city [should be] an antithesis to its bustling, paved, rectangular, walled-in streets,” Olmsted and Vaux designed picturesque landscaping in the English tradition, with the irregularities of topography and planting used as positive design elements. Except for a few formal elements, such as the tree-lined mall that leads to the Classically designed Bethesda Terrace and Fountain, the park is remarkably informal and naturalistic. Where the land was low, Olmsted and Vaux further depressed it, installing drainage tiles and carving out ponds and meadows. They planted clumps of trees to contrast with open spaces, and exposed natural outcroppings of schist to provide dramatic, rocky scenery. They arranged walking trails, bridle paths, and carriage drives through the park with a series of changing vistas. Intentionally appealing were the views from the apartment houses of the wealthy on the streets surrounding the park. An existing reservoir divided the park into two sections. Olmsted and Vaux developed the southern half more completely and located most of the sporting facilities and amenities there, while leaving the northern half more like a nature reserve. Largely complete by the end of the Civil War, Central Park was widely considered a triumph, launching a movement to build similar parks in cities across the United States.



31–53 • Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux MAP OF CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK CITY

Revised and extended park layout as shown in a map of 1873.

 **Watch** an architectural simulation about the city park on myartslab.com

famous for a robust, rusticated style known as Richardsonian Romanesque. In 1885, he designed the **MARSHALL FIELD WHOLESALE STORE** in Chicago (FIG. 31–54), drawing on the

design and scale of Italian Renaissance palaces such as the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence (see FIG. 20–7). Although the block-like, rough stone facing, the arched windows, and the decorated



31-54 • Henry Hobson Richardson
MARSHALL FIELD WHOLESALE STORE, CHICAGO
 1885–1887. Demolished c. 1935.

cornice all evoke historical architectural antecedents, Richardson's eclecticism resulted in a readily identifiable personal style.

Plain and sturdy, Richardson's building was a revelation to the young architects of Chicago, then engaged in rebuilding the city after the disastrous fire of 1871. About the same time, new technology for producing steel—a strong, cheap alloy of iron—created new structural opportunities for architects. William Le Baron Jenney (1832–1907) built the first steel-skeleton building in Chicago; his lead was quickly followed by younger architects in what was known as the Chicago School. The rapidly rising cost of urban land made tall buildings desirable; structural steel and the electric elevator (developed during the 1880s) made them possible.

SULLIVAN Equipped with new structural materials and improved passenger elevators, driven by new economic considerations, and inspired by Richardson's developments beyond Beaux-Arts historicism, the Chicago School architects produced not only a new style of architecture but a new kind of building—the skyscraper. An early example is Louis Sullivan's **WAINWRIGHT BUILDING** in St. Louis, Missouri (**FIG. 31-55**). The Boston-born Sullivan (1856–1924) studied for a year at the Massachusetts

Institute of Technology (MIT), home of the United States' first formal architecture program, and for an equally brief period at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he developed a distaste for historicism. He settled in Chicago in 1875, partly because of the building boom there that had followed the fire of 1871. In 1883 he entered into a partnership with the Danish-born engineer Dankmar Adler (1844–1900).

Sullivan's first major skyscraper, the Wainwright Building, has a U-shaped plan that provides an interior light-well for the illumination of inside offices. The ground floor, designed to house shops, has wide plate-glass windows for the display of merchandise. The second story, or mezzanine, also features large windows for the illumination of the shop offices. Above the mezzanine rise seven identical floors of offices, lit by rectangular windows. An attic story houses the building's mechanical plant and utilities. A richly decorated foliate frieze in terra-cotta relief crowns the building, punctuated by bull's-eye windows and capped by a thick cornice slab.

The Wainwright Building's outward appearance clearly articulates three different levels of function: shops at the bottom, offices in the middle, and mechanical utilities at the top. It illustrates Sullivan's stated architectural philosophy: "Form ever



31-55 • Louis Sullivan WAINWRIGHT BUILDING, ST. LOUIS
Missouri. 1890–1891.

 **View** the Closer Look for the Wainwright Building on myartslab.com

follows function.” This idea was adopted as a credo by Modernist architects, who used it to justify removal of all surface decoration from buildings. Sullivan designed the Wainwright Building for function, but he also created an expressive building. The thick corner piers, for example, are not structurally necessary—since an internal steel-frame skeleton supports the building—but they emphasize its vertical thrust. The thinner piers between the office windows, which rise uninterrupted from the third story to the attic, echo and reinforce its spring and verticality. As Sullivan put it, a tall office building “must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exultation.”

In the Wainwright Building that exultation culminates in the rich vegetative ornament that swirls around the crown of the building, serving a decorative function like that of the foliated capital of a Corinthian column. The tripartite structure of the building itself suggests the Classical column with its base, shaft, and capital, reflecting the lingering influence of Classical design principles. Only in the twentieth century would Modern architects reject tradition entirely to create an architectural aesthetic that was stripped of applied decoration.

CÉZANNE

No artist had a greater impact on the next generation of Modern painters than Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). The son of a prosperous banker in the southern French city of Aix-en-Provence, Cézanne studied art first in Aix and then in Paris, where he participated in the circle of Realist artists around Manet. His early pictures, somber in color and coarsely painted, often depicted Romantic themes of drama and violence, and were consistently rejected by the Salon.

In the early 1870s, under the influence of Pissarro, Cézanne changed his style. He adopted a bright palette and broken brushwork, and began painting landscapes. Like the Impressionists, with whom he exhibited in 1874 and 1877, Cézanne dedicated himself to the study of what he called the “sensations” of nature. Unlike the Impressionists, however, he did not seek to capture transitory effects of light and atmosphere; instead, he created highly structured paintings through



31-56 • Paul Cézanne MONT SAINTE-VICTOIRE

c. 1885–1887. Oil on canvas, 25½" × 32" (64.8 × 92.3 cm). Courtauld Gallery, London. © Samuel Courtauld Trust. (P.1934.SC.55)

 **Watch** a video about Paul Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire* on myartslab.com

a methodical application of color that merged drawing and modeling into a single process. His professed aim was to “make of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the art of the museums.”

Cézanne’s dedicated pursuit of this goal is evident in his repeated paintings of **MONT SAINTE-VICTOIRE**, a mountain close to his home in Aix, which he depicted in hundreds of drawings and about 30 oil paintings between the 1880s and his death in 1906. The painting in **FIGURE 31-56** presents the mountain rising above the Arc Valley, which is dotted with buildings and trees, and crossed at the far right by a railroad viaduct. Framing the scene to the left is an evergreen tree, which echoes the contours of the mountains, creating visual harmony between the two principal elements of the composition. The even light, still atmosphere, and absence of human activity create the sensation of timeless stillness.

Cézanne’s handling of paint is deliberate and controlled. His brushstrokes, which vary from short, parallel hatchings, to light lines, to broader swaths of flat color, weave together the elements

of the painting into a unified but flattened visual space. The surface design vies with the pictorial effect of receding space, generating tension between the illusion of three dimensions within the picture and the physical reality of its two-dimensional surface. Recession into depth is suggested by the tree in the foreground—a *repoussoir* (French for “something that pushes back”) that helps draw the eye into the valley—and by the transition from the saturated hues in the foreground to the lighter values in the background, creating an effect of atmospheric perspective. But recession into depth is challenged by other more intense colors in both the foreground and background, and by the tree branches in the sky, which follow the contours of the mountain, avoiding overlapping and subtly suggesting that the two are on the same plane. Photographs of this scene show that Cézanne created a composition in accordance with a harmony that he felt the scene demanded, rather than reproducing in detail the landscape itself. His commitment to the painting as a work of art, which he called “something other than reality”—not a representation of nature but “a construction



31-57 • Paul Cézanne STILL LIFE WITH BASKET OF APPLES

1880–1894. Oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ " × 31" (62.5 × 79.5 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection (1926.252)

after nature”—was a crucial step toward the modern art of the next century.

Spatial ambiguities of a different sort appear in Cézanne's later still lifes, in which many of the objects may seem at first glance to be incorrectly drawn. In **STILL LIFE WITH BASKET OF APPLES** (FIG. 31-57), for example, the right side of the table is higher than the left, the wine bottle has two distinct silhouettes, and the pastries on the table next to it tilt upward toward the viewer, while we seem to see the apples head-on. Such shifting viewpoints are not evidence of incompetence; they derive from Cézanne's willful rejection of the rules of traditional perspective. Although scientific linear perspective mandates that the eye of the artist (and hence the viewer) occupy a fixed point relative to the scene (see Renaissance Perspective," page 610), Cézanne presents the objects in his still lifes from a variety of different positions just as we might move around or turn our heads to take everything in. The composition as a whole, assembled from multiple sightings, is consequently complex and dynamic. Instead of faithfully reproducing static objects from a stable vantage point, Cézanne recreated, or reconstructed, our viewing experiences through time and space.

Cézanne enjoyed little professional success until the last years of his life, when his paintings became more complex internally and more detached from observed reality. **THE LARGE BATHERS** (FIG. 31-58), probably begun in the last year of his life and left unfinished, was the largest canvas he ever painted. It returns in several ways to the academic conventions of history painting as a monumental, multi-figured composition of nude figures in a landscape setting that suggests a mythological theme. The bodies cluster in two pyramidal groups at left and right, beneath a canopy of trees that opens in the middle onto a triangular expanse of water, landscape, and sky. The figures assume statuesque, often Classical poses and seem to exist outside recognizable time and space. Using a restricted palette of blues, greens, ochers, and roses, laid down over a white ground, Cézanne suffused the picture with a cool light that emphasizes the scene's remoteness from everyday life. Despite its unfinished state, *The Large Bathers* brings nineteenth-century painting full circle by reviving the Arcadian landscape, a much earlier category of academic painting, while opening a new window on some radical rethinking about the fundamental practice and purpose of art.



31-58 • Paul Cézanne THE LARGE BATHERS

1906. Oil on canvas, 6'10" × 8'2" (2.08 × 2.49 m). Philadelphia Museum of Art. The W.P. Wiltach Collection

THINK ABOUT IT

- 31.1** Discuss the interests and goals of French academic painters and sculptors and explain how their work differed from other art of the same time and place, such as that of the Realists and Impressionists.
- 31.2** Discuss the innovative content of Impressionist paintings, and explain how it differs from that of traditional European paintings by focusing on one specific work discussed in the chapter.
- 31.3** Discuss Gustave Courbet's Realism in works such as *The Stone Breakers* (FIG. 31-12) and *A Burial at Ornans* (FIG. 31-13) in relation to the social and political issues of mid-century France.
- 31.4** Explain how the photographic process works and evaluate the roles played by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot in the emergence of this medium.

CROSSCURRENTS



FIG. 21-28

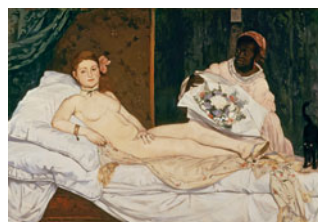


FIG. 31-18

European artists often refer to or seek inspiration in works of art from the past when creating works that address the concerns of their own present. This is certainly the case with Manet, whose painting of *Olympia* recalls aspects of the composition and subject of Titian's "*Venus*" of Urbino. But the messages of these two works are very different. Analyze the meanings of these paintings. Do they express the concerns of artist, patron, society, or some mixture of the three?

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